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FRIEND OR ALLY?  
A QUESTION FOR  
NEW ZEALAND

By EWAN JAMIESON



THE INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL STRATEGIC STUDIES

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*A popular Government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy, or, perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance. And a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.*

—James Madison to W. T. Barry  
August 4, 1822

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May 1991

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## PREFACE

The dispute between the United States and New Zealand over alliance obligations, which came to a head in early 1985, has not been settled by the US Secretary of State's decision to reopen limited contact with his New Zealand ministerial counterpart. The unprofitable standoff continues. Unless their political leaders are prepared to show greater regard for national interests—and less for their own advantage—both nations are fated to suffer continuing damage of more consequence than the momentary benefits gained from the expediency that has marked too much of the past handling of the disagreement.

The most serious consequences of the original breach remain with us. In particular, New Zealand continues to be hurt by being left on the outside of world affairs critical to its future. Wellington's ability to influence other governments and so move events to its advantage has been seriously weakened. Too much is at stake for New Zealanders to let the drift into international irrelevance continue. For a small Western nation which lives on trade—predominantly with distant and more powerful nations of similar political orientation—geographic isolation is burden enough. Voluntarily to compound that by accepting restraints on political association, when nothing of substance stands in the way of reconciliation, is irresponsible folly.

New Zealand has gained nothing of substance from Secretary Baker's decision. In fact, it has suffered a reverse. Recovery of full association has been made more unlikely by the immoderate, if predictable, reaction to Washington's show of partial forgiveness. The limited contact proposed by Secretary Baker is a far cry from the ready, unrestricted access which was one of the privileges of alliance membership; for New Zealand, it is not an adequate basis on which to conduct such an important relationship.

The United States will gain nothing if it lets the present situation stand. New Zealand is not a major player in world

affairs, but it has been a good friend and valued ally in the past. It could contribute more to the stability and security of the South Pacific if allowed back on the field with the United States than it can while banished from play. The unresolved security disagreement stands witness to Washington's inability to manage an alliance with a nation which the world recognizes has more in common with the United States than all but a very few other nations. There is more to be gained for the United States, too, in full cooperation than in the present limited relationship.

The way in which the dispute has been handled so far does credit to few of the main players. The New Zealand Government, under Prime Minister Lange, gulled the public into allowing it to take the nation out of close association with the United States behind a smoke-screen of imaginary nuclear peril. Secretary Baker evidently was prepared to sacrifice the prospect of return to a full alliance relationship with New Zealand merely to deflect congressional criticism of his part in the Scowcroft/Eagleburger visits to "the butchers of Peking." Now, in a blatant show of electoral opportunism, the principal opposition party in New Zealand, National, has embraced the Labour Party's doctrinaire anti-nuclearism and joined the retreat from alliance.

In today's rapidly changing world, it might be argued, few of the original reasons for forming ANZUS are likely to prove relevant to the partners' future needs. Japan is unlikely to revert to military aggression to advance its national ambitions. It is doing well enough through economic expansionism. As China grapples with daunting domestic difficulties and the Soviet Union turns away from reliance on military power to forward its political and economic interests, the balance of the main benefits of alliance is changing. But the world is not so altered that the status of ally is now without value. In many respects, in fact, in this time of great change and uncertainty the need for the solid base of alliance, upon which to construct a strong web of international relationships, is greater than ever. New Zealanders cannot afford to put to one side as no longer important the issues raised by their nation's departure from active membership of ANZUS. What was to others no more than a minor disturbance in global affairs was a major watershed in New Zealand's



foreign relations. The greatest sacrifice made at the time of the split with the United States was not of the security guarantee—important as that might still prove in the unpredictable future. It was of the close association previously enjoyed with all the great Western nations. The loss of New Zealand's military contribution is of little lasting importance to any of its erstwhile partners, but its withdrawal to the sidelines threatened the solidarity on which Western collective security was based since World War II. Its consequent rejection as a reliable partner is likely to do serious harm to a small trading nation's ability to protect its economic interests in a world in which making a living is likely to become ever more difficult.

What New Zealand has sacrificed by abandoning the ANZUS connection cannot be judged adequately in simple United States/New Zealand terms. It must also be viewed in the context of the vital link to Australia and, more broadly, in likely future changes in New Zealand's wider international relationships. Since mid-1989 the rate of change in world political affairs has been almost beyond comprehension. The shifting political orientation of a number of strategically important countries may be the first dramatic sign of a fundamental reshaping of the balance of military, political, and economic power throughout the world. It will certainly not be the last.

The adjustments now in progress will have further effects. Some will be unexpected: not all will be welcome. World trading relationships, in particular, could be on the brink of fundamental change. The gloomy Orwellian vision of a few exclusive super trade blocs is becoming an all too possible reality. Should that vision prove prophetic, this is no time for any trading nation to be on the outside, unable to influence affairs vital to its future economic survival. The welcome fading of the Cold War clearly suggests that a review of alliance priorities is in order. But, just as clearly, such a review must be made on the basis of long-term national interests, not on short-term political advantage.

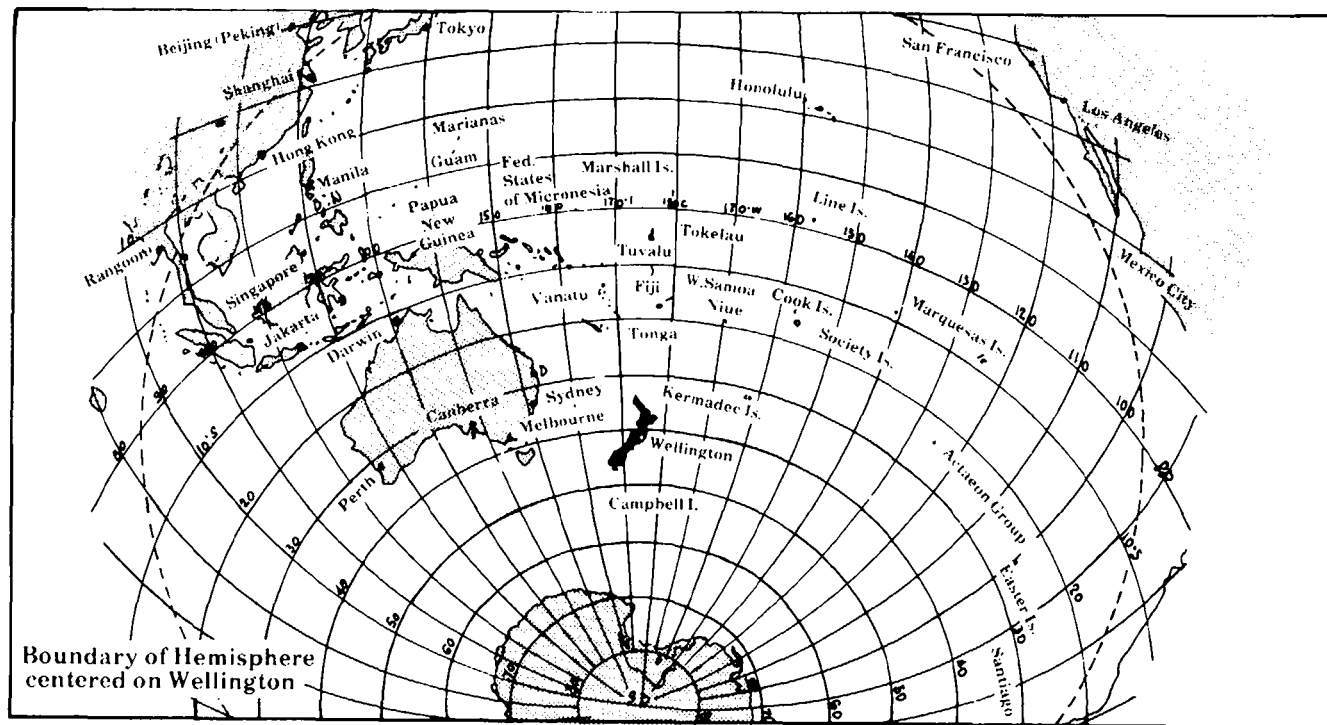
The question whether New Zealand should be content to accept its present place as a distant friend of the main actors, limited to watching from a remote wing of the world stage, or attempt to recover its old inside position as a member of the cast, is too important to be put off to a quieter day. Even

granting the uncertainty of predicting how the world will be in ten or twenty years, we ought to have enough confidence in our judgement to reject creeping isolationism. If New Zealand's disconnection from the Western community of nations is allowed to go on too long, the belief that the condition is natural could become so firmly established in the minds of New Zealand's traditional allies and of its own citizens that recovery would be almost impossible.

There are some who would welcome withdrawal into non-aligned isolationism: it is what they have been working toward during the past five years or more. I am not one of them. Nor, I believe, are more than a minority of New Zealanders supportive of their efforts. It is to the others, many of whom are concerned that the nation has been led under a false banner into international irrelevance, that I have set out to speak. If there are some among them who think the effort worthwhile, then, so shall I.

Washington DC,  
1990

FRIEND OR ALLY?  
A QUESTION FOR NEW ZEALAND



The View from New Zealand

## I. THE PARTING

*The time has come to part. We part as friends—  
but we part.*

George P. Shultz  
Manila, July 1986



WITH THE WORDS, “we part,” the Secretary of State for the United States of America informed the Prime Minister of New Zealand that time and American patience had run out. The administration he represented was no longer prepared to tolerate its errant partner’s slow, erratic, and inconclusive show of effort to find a mutually acceptable accommodation on which to base return to a full alliance relationship. A firm line was drawn across the ledger of New Zealand’s account as a fully paid up and accepted member of the Western alliance. George Shultz’ simple words marked an historic turning point in United States/New Zealand relations and, perhaps even more significantly to many New Zealanders, in their nation’s unqualified acceptance as a partner engaged in the most vital affairs of the Western world.

### *The Origins of the Dispute*

In July 1984 a new Labour government came to power in Wellington. The parliamentary elections which brought that about had been called early by Prime Minister Sir Robert Muldoon (leader of the ruling National Party) when he found his meagre majority in Parliament seriously challenged by two of

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In 1990, *Friend or Ally? New Zealand at Odds with Its Past*, a longer examination of the subject by Ewan Jamieson, was published by Brassey’s, Australia.

The New Zealand Labour Party, under three prime ministers—Lange, Palmer, and Moore—was in power while Ewan Jamieson was writing *Friend or Ally?* The National Party, led by Jim Bolger, scored an overwhelming victory in the elections held in October 1990.—Ed.

his members "crossing the floor of the House" to vote in support of a private anti-nuclear bill proposed by a member of the Opposition. Although the bill was defeated (because two disgruntled members of the Opposition countered by crossing the other way) there was a clear possibility that a vote of no confidence in the government would be called on the issue at the first opportunity—that is, when the two dissident Labour members were absent from the House. In that case the government would have fallen. Prime Minister Muldoon decided that effective government was impossible under those circumstances. He, therefore, called an early election.

Inevitably, in the circumstances under which the election had been called, the nuclear issue became an important, but not the decisive factor. The National Party candidates did not handle the debate well, preferring to ignore the nuclear issue as much as possible rather than explain its importance to relations with the United States and in preserving peace between the superpowers. It could fairly be said the Labour won that round in the overall bout without a hand being laid on it. National lay down.

The greatest concern among voters was that the adoption of an anti-nuclear position would be incompatible with continued membership of ANZUS, on which a substantial majority of voters placed great value. Labour assured the electorate they could have both. In terms of the cliché which became hackneyed during the next year, "they could have their cake and eat it."

On the eve of assuming office the Prime Minister designate, David Lange, got from Secretary of State Shultz agreement that the port visit issue should not be put to the test until time had been given to prepare the way. It was agreed that there would be no application for a port visit made within the first six months of his government. As the months rolled by with Lange's public efforts apparently directed at increasing rather than moderating the anti-nuclear fervour—making future US Navy port visits more difficult to arrange—the US government became increasingly suspicious it was being strung along. It, therefore, insisted the issue be put to the test as soon as the agreed six months' pause was up. Recognizing the crunch could be delayed no longer, Lange agreed the United States should nominate a vessel for a port visit in March 1985, following its

participation in "Exercise Sea Eagle," to be held off the east coast of Australia. After consultation in Hawaii the destroyer USS *Buchanan* was selected for nomination and preliminary notice sent to Wellington.

In late January 1985, a formal application to make a port visit was lodged through standard diplomatic channels. By then, it must have become clear to Lange that the opposition within his party and caucus would make impossible acceptance of any warship other than one certified by the local Peace Movement as having no nuclear capability. Lange left for the remote Tokelau Islands, on a family holiday with his two sons, at the time the application was expected. In his absence the internal opposition grew even stronger. On his return, and after sampling the attitudes of key party members, Lange asked the Americans to withdraw the nomination of the *Buchanan* and substitute an FFG7 *Perry*-class frigate, to which the local Peace Movement had already given its blessing. No *Perry*-class was available and, in any case, it might be considered unlikely the US authorities would have agreed to a last minute change of course which did no more than postpone the vital decision for a few more months while leaving open the opportunity for the New Zealand government to crow that it had forced the change and so won a moral victory.

On 5 February 1985, the New Zealand government declined the application. Many American officials thought they had been led up the garden path, and Washington's response was angry and immediate. The US defence guarantee to New Zealand was withdrawn. The flow of information, on which the New Zealand intelligence community was heavily dependent, was terminated. Notice was served that while the restriction on port access remained in place, the US armed forces would not participate in any exercises in company with members of the New Zealand armed forces. New Zealand servicemen could no longer attend training courses in the United States and in allied nations where attendance required access to American provided information or equipment. New Zealand ships and aircraft could no longer routinely enter US military establishments. It later became evident that further restrictions had been placed on contact between senior US officials and New Zealand

government and defence representatives. Finally, and most significantly, the US government advised that it would not take part in future ANZUS Council meetings in company with New Zealand while the port restriction remained in operation. In effect, that placed a stay on New Zealand's active participation in the ANZUS alliance.

Their nation's effective eviction from the close and comforting relationship with the preeminent Western power came as a great shock to most New Zealanders. Had they not been assured that adoption of an anti-nuclear policy would not prejudice membership of ANZUS? The astonishment was little less in the capitals of allied and friendly nations where New Zealand's reputation as a committed supporter of collective security and a dependable friend in time of need was second to none. What had brought about this radical change? Was it permanent or just a temporary aberration?

### *Sense of National Identity*

From the time of its annexation by Britain in February 1840, New Zealand's reputation had been that of possibly the most staunch or compliant (depending on one's prejudices) of all the "old Commonwealth" members. As a mark of their disdain for New Zealand's close identification with Britain, Australians were wont to refer to their trans-Tasman cousins as "Pacific Poms,"<sup>1</sup> thinking that the most wounding jibe they could invent. The implication was that, unlike the independent Australians, New Zealanders were poor creatures, still tied to Mother Britain's apron-strings and lacking a proper sense of their separate identity. What really dismayed the Aussies was that few of their Kiwi friends took exception to the description. Certainly New Zealanders were later than Australians to find a sense of independent national identity and, until some time after World War II, few of them showed any sense of urgency in the search. Close association with Britain was comfortable for a developing nation in need of a defence guarantee, financial investment, and the assured market for its farm products which a show of loyal dependence seemed likely to attract.

World War II may have been the first clear turning point for New Zealand. The second was the British move to join the



European Community and, in so doing, to accept attenuation of the old Commonwealth ties. Shocked by the spectacle of the British defeat in Singapore in 1942 and further dismayed by Britain's decline after World War II to the status of a middle power (bled almost to death by the sacrifices of two great wars), a thankful New Zealand transferred its main security reliance to the United States when, in April 1952, the ANZUS Treaty came into effect.

In its willing security dependence first upon Great Britain and then the United States, New Zealand's practical gains far outweighed any theoretical loss of independence. Knowledge that there was, in the background, a powerful ally whose protection had been earned was a comfort, especially to those with memories of the war with Japan. New Zealand gained a much stronger defence shield than it could ever expect to provide from its own limited financial and manpower resources. Historically, New Zealanders have been strong in their support of collective action to oppose the global spread of tyrannous regimes or to assist other small nations unable to stand alone against aggression. They understood their own security depended, in the long run, on defence of the right of all other nations to live in independence and security within their own borders, and that the defeat of any nation left unaided to be picked off, increased the danger to those remaining. The illusory safety of withdrawal into the role of uninvolved spectator had few takers.

#### *Past Commitment to Collective Defence*

New Zealand had never looked for a free ride. Most New Zealanders would dispute the suggestion hotly, pointing with pride to a record of shared sacrifice (often at heavier cost per head of population than almost any of its allies) in the defence of common interests. To paraphrase Kipling, New Zealanders felt entitled to claim, "If blood be the price of alliance, Lord God, we have paid in full."<sup>2</sup> Sir Keith Sinclair, an eminent New Zealand historian, has suggested his countrymen have been too ready to spring to arms. He dubbed them "the Prussians of the South Pacific." There are, on the other hand, many more New Zealanders content to accept that colourful characterization, not in rebuke but as no more than a slightly distorted reflection of an

honourable record of burden sharing in times of common danger. No shortage occurred, in a virile young country, of those ready to follow the example of earlier generations in taking up arms when they saw the need to defend wider freedoms—not to mention escape from the bondage of geographic isolation.

In July 1984, with the election of a new Labour government led by David Lange, a radical new path was taken. To the astonishment of its close friends and allies (and to a large part of its own population) New Zealand adopted policies that led, predictably, to its abrupt departure from the pattern of alliance commitment which had marked its previous history.

### *Effect on Western Strategic Interests*

It is unlikely that, at the time, more than a few in government in Wellington—and fewer still outside that circle—understood clearly the full implications of what was being done. New Zealand's move to reject the nuclear element of containment and challenge their allies' non-declaratory policy, threatened to do serious harm to Western security. The move struck at the heart of the grand strategy which the Western allies had pursued since aggressive Soviet expansionism, inspired and driven by Stalin, became apparent soon after World War II.

There have been three main pillars to that strategy. The first was to demonstrate in practice the advantages a capitalist market economy enjoys over its communist, centrally controlled counterpart. The second was to convince Moscow that there is no possibility of gaining its political objectives by the use of military power, no matter how hard it squeezed its citizens to build a massive war machine. The third was to contain the physical and political growth of the Soviets' presence while time was given for the first two lessons to register.<sup>3</sup> The dramatic changes now taking place within the USSR and East Europe are the direct result of the success of that strategy. That very success is the best possible testimony to the resolve with which all but a very few democratic Western nations stuck together in the common interest.

*The Awkward Timing*

New Zealand's decision to break ranks came at a particularly awkward time for its friends and allies. The trial of wills over containment had reached a climax with the deployment of the Soviet SS-20s and the counterdeployment of American Pershing 2 and Ground Launched Cruise Missiles (GLCMs). The breach in solidarity threatened to undermine the collective security strategy. Throughout the whole Western community there was agreement that a firm response was necessary to show that self-centred irresponsibility on the part of New Zealand which prejudiced wider interests could not be tolerated. Too much was seen to be at stake to allow old friendships and gratitude for past contributions to the common cause to cloud judgement at such a critical time.

*Why the Change of Course?*

There is no obvious explanation for the sudden change that occurred at that time in a country noted until then for its high regard for the principles of collective security and its dependability when the going got tough. No doubt some New Zealanders felt discomfort over the close association with and, therefore, inferred dependence upon a nation of so much greater power as the United States. Sensitivity to the almost embarrassing differences in size and global status was most intense among the disenchanted "Vietnam generation" so strongly represented in the leading ranks of the incoming government.

The members of the incoming government discovered, almost to their surprise, that, in explicit anti-nuclearism and implicit anti-Americanism, they held in their hands two powerful weapons with which to belabour the parliamentary opposition. The National Party, stunned by a decisive electoral rejection after years spent basking in the complacent assumption that it alone was "the natural party of government" in New Zealand and beset with leadership uncertainty, was for a time incapable of putting up a coherent defence of the policies it had followed when in office. During the first few months of the new government's term the parliamentary field lay open, ready to be won without a fight of any consequence.

To gain wide popular support, it may have been enough

that the policies pursued were contrary to those followed for years by a party so recently discredited by heavy electoral defeat. Debate within New Zealand certainly lacked depth during the euphoric period following the 1984 elections, in which a fresh, comparatively young Cabinet took up the reins and set off at a gallop along a different path which seemed to offer heady exhilaration, if only because the road was unfamiliar and the pace headlong. In addition, there was a facile attraction in the satisfying assumption of moral superiority—shared by many outside the usual band of Labour supporters—which came from the popular pretension that “little New Zealand” was giving a righteous lead to the greater nations of the world. New Zealand was pointing the way to the moral uplands where universal peace and brotherly love might be found if only others would follow the true path of anti-nuclearism and freedom from entangling alliances.

### *The Nuclear Paradox*

A common assertion made by supporters of the New Zealand government's policies has been this one: “Surely if we can get ourselves out of the nuclear system we would be doing ourselves and the rest of the world a favour, and that ought to be enough.”<sup>4</sup> It is a seductive assumption, based on the dogmatic conviction that both nuclear weapons and dependence upon them to prevent another world war are essentially evil.

That simple judgement is, at least, open to rational query, taking into account the actual record of the control of great-power conflict since the dawn of the nuclear age in August 1945. An equally compelling case can be made that the advent of nuclear weapons has presented man with the awful challenge to either find a more intelligent method than war to settle conflicts of national interest or face annihilation. At last, in the second half of the 20th century, man has had his mind focused as never before on the essential need to find a peaceful path along which to direct international relations. The advocates of that view (of whom I count myself one) argue that it would be foolish—and, almost certainly, adverse to the prospects of global peace in our children's time—to construct policies on the expectation that the nuclear factor can be removed entirely from the

equation when calculating the shape of mankind's future.

Neither of the superpowers is going to give away completely the one form of weapon that can provide almost certain assurance it will never again be engaged in unrestrained warfare threatening its very existence as a coherent nation. Nor will either be prepared to run the risk of being caught unprepared to counter a threat posed by an adversary which has covertly armed itself with nuclear weapons or some new form of mass destruction.

Nuclear weapons are essentially self-cancelling. They have little practical utility except to impose restraint on the great powers in their use of force to attain political objectives. As Europe changes and superpower confrontation decreases they will probably become even less relevant to the conduct of international affairs. The continued obsession with a decreasing danger, allowing it to dominate the formulation of policies intended to best serve a nation's interests, is nonsensical.

In the meantime, the fundamental contradiction in the perception of the role of nuclear weapons as either threatening to destroy the world or offering the promise of a major step towards lasting peace on earth is at the heart of disagreement in New Zealand, just as it is elsewhere. The difference, in New Zealand, is that since July 1984 the policies adopted by the government have been influenced to an almost unique degree by pessimistic doom-sayers.

### *The Possibility of Return*

There is no special reason to assume New Zealand will remain permanently so obsessed with an exaggerated nuclear peril (of less direct relevance to it than almost any other nation) that it is prepared to sacrifice real and essential interests, rather than accept the speculative possibility its virtue might be marred by unwittingly having brought into one of its harbours some form of nuclear device on board a visiting allied warship. The probability has been very small since July 1984. The changes that have since occurred in both the world security situation and in US naval policy affecting the carriage of tactical nuclear weapons, has now made the risk negligible.

It may be true that the political creed of Marxism, having

been tried, is now almost universally rejected, but Marx' dictum that thesis attracts antithesis and the combination, in turn, inspires synthesis cannot be dismissed so readily. It is, after all, not so much a terse statement of political theory as of the principle of evolutionary development affecting all living organisms. Not even remote New Zealand is immune from the process. A student of its history might be expected to identify the present as an aberrant departure from which rebound could be predicted. If the relatively long period of whole-hearted commitment to collective security is seen as the past thesis, and the present withdrawal into self-centred "semi-alignment"<sup>5</sup> as its antithesis, logic and an appreciation of the flow of history would suggest New Zealand must, at some time, experience an irresistible urge to find a synthesis which more perfectly advances the national interest. Eventual return to alliance cannot yet be written off.

### *ALLIANCE: ITS NATURE AND OBLIGATIONS*

When all the trimmings have been stripped away, it is enough to say that an alliance is no more, nor less, than formal recognition of a special relationship existing between two or more nations. So long as mutuality of special regard continues and each of the partners believes its interests well served by the acceptance of the responsibilities of reciprocal support the alliance can be expected to remain healthy. Conversely, should the common recognition of that sense of mutual concern fade, no matter how explicit or solemn may be its undertakings, the treaty will be meaningless. That might be seen as the basic reason for the failure of the United States/New Zealand link within ANZUS in 1985.

#### *The Spirit of Mutual Commitment*

The strength of a treaty is not to be found in the language in which it is written, but in the spirit of mutual commitment that motivates its members. Once any of the partners decides the

advantages of participation are less than the disadvantages of honouring the obligations of membership, the alliance in its application to that member may be considered a dead letter, or held firmly in the pending tray until something changes. Regardless of what reassuring noises may be made about commitments entered into at the time of signature remaining in force until some formal ritual of withdrawal has been completed, the fact is that reciprocal obligations have meaning only when they are honoured in full by all parties. Treaties of alliance don't have to be killed off with prescribed ceremony. Like old soldiers, "they simply fade away" when a country indicates it no longer needs their services.

In the case of ANZUS, the Treaty itself is not dead. It remains remarkably healthy so far as two of the original partners are concerned. The fact that the third partner has, at this time, taken a path which is no longer supportive of its fellows has automatically rendered the obligations of mutual support inapplicable to New Zealand but not as between the others. There is no mechanism provided within the terms of the ANZUS Treaty for any member to renounce membership. All a member country wishing to signal its resignation can do is serve notice that it no longer intends to take part in Council meetings. That might be seen as having the same effect as final renunciation of treaty membership. In fact, it does no more than acknowledge its active membership has been put on ice. Should the point of dispute be removed, there would be no legal bar to its seeking readmission to the Council and reactivation of its treaty guarantees and obligations.

### *Breadth of Coverage*

No treaty of alliance is of much substance unless it applies to the entire spectrum of relationships between the members. So far as each member is concerned it is an expression of national strategy and that, in turn, encompasses the three essential elements of political, economic, and defence interests. The focal point of shared concerns specified within the terms of a treaty may be national security but, in the interests of combined effectiveness, the members need to be as mutually supportive in political and economic as in military terms. It might be argued that, so far as

the smaller partners are concerned, in a time of low threat the greatest benefit they derive from alliance with a great power is in consultation on political and economic issues that spring from alliance membership.

### *Primacy of Political Oversight*

There is a too common misapprehension that because alliances such as NATO, and ANZUS, are called security treaties they are military relationships, that is, inspired by military men for military purposes and run by the military. That is quite incorrect. Both of those treaties were put together by politicians and are controlled by their successors. Having learned something of the danger of disunity in the lead up to both World Wars political representatives of the allied nations agreed to band together to deter, in combination, potential aggression which might be beyond even the strongest among them if left to stand alone. The main purpose of the alliances formed at that time is to avoid war by presenting a strong common front. They are intended to preserve—not to destroy: to protect freedom in peace—not to impose political will through armed force. To do that effectively the members must set out to be not only militarily stronger in combination than individually. They must also work together to be economically and politically better coordinated and so more capable of influencing the development of world affairs to their common benefit.

As political organisms security alliances are directed by national political leaders acting primarily through their Ministers of Foreign Affairs or representatives of equivalent status. The Ministers of Defence play important but secondary roles in guiding the alliance deliberations and policy formulation. They do not necessarily attend all alliance Council meetings, which deal with far more than the defence aspects of shared security concerns. The military officers who attend are there to provide specialist advice when required and, later, to implement policies agreed by the political principals. They do not make policy. Even if so inclined, they recognise that they lack the authority to do so.



*The Pros and Cons of Alliance*

It is fair to ask whether it enhances international security for nations to join alliances. There are those who question their effectiveness in preserving peace, arguing that banding together breeds confrontation and inhibits the evolution of better and more relaxed international relations. Others argue that they cause arms races and arms races lead to war. None of those objections is based on an incontestible truth.

Most recently, the role of the Western alliance in moderating the Kremlin's earlier aggressive policies and reducing the threat of war would seem to have given the lie to the first assumption. The Gorbachev phenomenon is, in large part, the product of Western solidarity in collective defence. Mikhail Gorbachev himself acknowledged as much in his address to the General Assembly of the United Nations on 7 December 1988:

The use or threat of use of force no longer can or must be an instrument of foreign policy.... In the age of nuclear weapons it is futile to seek political power through military means.

He might just as truly have said, "In the face of a strong and resolute alliance it is futile to seek political power through military means." Nuclear weapons may be the single most powerful element of deterrence, but alone they could not have provided the certain shield which, as Gorbachev has recognised, now rules out the successful use of military force to achieve political objectives. At least equally important has been the resolute unity of NATO members and US firm identification with the defence of Europe.

Having reached that conclusion, Gorbachev has sought to minimise the importance of the military factor in international relations. Most of all, he will want to eliminate nuclear weapons or, if that proves impossible, to neutralise their military and political effectiveness. Not only has he a very natural fear of the devastation they could cause; he also must understand that while they exist there will be no possibility that military power will again be a usable factor in the resolution of conflict between the superpowers. That conclusion demands a fundamental reshaping of Soviet foreign policy. The maintenance of and freedom to use

military power is the one area in which, as an authoritarian state, the USSR has had a special advantage over the democracies. It has no other obvious assets on which to base a claim to global status as a superpower. Its economic system has been shown to be inefficient. Its political system has been rejected in the most decisive way possible by the whole of Eastern Europe. Few in the Third World any longer see communism as a system worth adopting except as a means of applying totalitarian control over their people.

Since 1945 Moscow has made the running on total force size. Past Soviet leaders claimed, in justification of the unremitting drive to modernize and strengthen all arms of their forces, the need to deter what they saw as a relentlessly hostile combination of potential attackers encircling the USSR. President Gorbachev appears, at last, convinced that no other nation or group of nations would seek advantage in attacking the Soviet Union. His testimony before the General Assembly of the UN implied that he accepted that fact. If the claim that the mission of the Soviet armed forces is now to be strictly defensive is true, Moscow can afford to make slashing cuts in the confidence that the West will be quick to follow suit and make savings in defence in favour of politically more attractive expenditure. The consequent reduction in mutual fear would minimize the danger of preemptive attack or war by miscalculation. Both superpowers would then be more secure than at any other time since World War II—and at a much lower cost in both money and manpower.

President Gorbachev is not taking a great gamble. Should the currently improbable occur and military force again become usable on a grand scale, as the ruler of a nation in which the popular voice has never had much say in setting government policy he, or one of his successors, would be able to rebuild the Soviet forces more readily than any truly democratic government could rearm. Democracies suffer the extra constraint of having to win public support before they can demand the greater personal sacrifices needed to expand defence forces. That takes time and, even then, is not always successful until the imbalance has become too great to be dismissed as unthreatening. By then, as in the late 1930s, it could be too late for the democracies to

catch up and so deter aggression. In the past, great wars have started in that way. In the future, under the threat of nuclear weapons, a great defeat could be suffered without war.

The changes Mikhail Gorbachev set in motion to modify the economic and political structure of the USSR and to free the nations of East Europe to choose their own paths were also the rational outcome of an objective analysis of the Soviet Union's situation and prospects. Since military power could not be relied on to advance the Soviet Union's interests, Gorbachev had no alternative but to make the political and economic changes required to strengthen the domestic base and so enhance international status. Moreover, he no doubt saw that if the rapid decline of the economy were not reversed, Soviet military power would eventually wither and the USSR would lose its only present claim to superpower status. With war ruled out as an option, Eastern Europe was no longer needed as a defensive buffer. As he totted up the costs incurred propping up regimes of dubious ideological commitment and loyalty in a crunch, Gorbachev must have come to the reasonable conclusion that, on balance, withdrawal would be to the Soviet Union's economic and international political advantage.

The logic of what had to be done should have been equally obvious to his predecessors. Admittedly he is of a different generation, less affected by experience of the Leninist/Stalinist era, but that is probably not the only explanation. Perhaps his observation of the unsuccessful trial of wills over INF deployments finally brought the truth home to him and those receptive to his views within the Central Committee. To his great credit he had the intellectual strength to recognise the logic of his nation's situation and the political courage to risk a reactionary backlash as he led off in an entirely new direction. Regardless of how long he may stay in power or what may be the final result of his attempted reforms, respect for those qualities will last.

The second objection raised against alliance membership—the two interlinked claims that alliance must lead to an arms race and an arms race must lead to war—also deserves consideration. Recent agreements to do away with all intermediate-range nuclear missiles and to negotiate substantial reductions in both strategic missiles and conventional forces have made the

fallacy of the first assertion obvious. It is fair to argue that, contrary to the predictions of the opponents of alliance, it was the very presence of a strong and unified alliance that brought the superpower arms race to an end.

### *The Importance of Unity*

The assertion that arms races lead inevitably to war is no more compelling. Historically, it has been shown that arms races are most likely to lead to war when competition is one-sided and power becomes unbalanced. That is what occurred in the decade before World War II. It can be argued also that a lack of clear alliance unity was a major factor in bringing about both the 1914-18 and 1939-45 World Wars. If, in 1914, the strength of commitment of the "Entente" had been less questionable and the link to the third partner, Russia, had been more solid, the German General Staff would have been hard-pressed to sell to the Kaiser a picture of certain victory. If, in 1938-39, Britain, France, Czechoslovakia, and Poland had had an explicit commitment to come to one another's aid in the event of any of them being attacked, even Hitler might have been deterred from starting the process of incremental aggression, which was the central principle of his grand strategy. The pessimism of his General Staff would have been given clearer focus, perhaps to the extent they would have turned him out before he led the nation into a military disaster greater even than World War I.

There are three factors of critical importance to a successful strategy of collective deterrence. They are political will, military capability, and alliance unity. Of those, unity is most frequently considered the best measure of an alliance's political will and, therefore, of its likely military response should the gauntlet be thrown down. That is why New Zealand's move to challenge a central plank of Western security strategy was seen as so important when NATO's collective resolve over INF deployments was under special trial. New Zealand's record of commitment to collective defence made its change of heart more significant than might be suggested by a simple assessment of the direct effects the loss of its small military contribution or denial of access to its ports could have on Western defence plans. Its defection could be seen as evidence that the whole

network of Western alliances might be on the point of crumbling. The suggestion that the Soviet Union need only bide its time to see larger Western allies, in strategically more critical positions, break ranks was a particularly dangerous message to give at that time. A sharp response was inevitable.

### *What New Zealand Lost*

New Zealand lost more than the respect of its allies and a place at the council table. No matter how remote the probability of direct armed aggression against it may appear today, the record of 1989 should have taught us that completely unexpected changes are possible and can occur overnight. The amazing events in Eastern Europe offer spectacular evidence of how difficult it is to predict the future with confidence. The state terrorism of the sinking of the *Rainbow Warrior* in Auckland harbour in 1986 was a true "bolt out of the blue" to all New Zealanders. No one had predicted anything of that kind. In fact, those responsible for assessing responsibility had difficulty accepting the reality of French involvement even when evidence was rapidly discovered. The facts seemed too bizarre to be credible. If that level of utterly unforeseen and rationally unpredictable state-sponsored violence against New Zealand's sovereignty was possible then, what assurance can be accepted that something even more violent and on a grander scale could not occur with no more warning in the future?

It is a well established principle of contingency planning that provision must always be made to cope with the unforeseen. The unexpected is the most likely to occur. Although super-power tensions may be much lower than they were in 1984, when the present difficulties arose within ANZUS, the potential for regional instability is more apparent. Without assured US support—even should only intelligence and logistic assistance be needed—New Zealand is less well equipped to deal with the unforeseen. Its national security is, therefore, less certain than it was before the breach in ANZUS. That is not to be shrugged off as unimportant.

The most serious immediate disadvantage suffered has been in the loss of international political acceptability where it matters. That is, with principal trading partners. For example, no

New Zealand Prime Minister has visited Tokyo or Washington since the present government came to power in July 1984, yet Japan and the United States are two of the country's most important trading partners. In 1987, the mid-point of the period since the dispute blew up, together they took 31.3 percent of New Zealand's exports and supplied 36.7 percent of its imports.<sup>6</sup> Who can say how much greater the trade flow might have been if relations at the top had been more cordial? There is no point in suggesting the two are not linked. If that were true there would be little purpose in holding international meetings at the highest level since, in time of peace, the principal national interest is commonly seen to be economic prosperity and, to that end, the advantageous flow of trade.

Can anyone argue that the Prime Minister of Australia would have been able so effectively to make known his objections to the proposed release overseas, in 1986/87, of vast quantities of United States' wheat (at subsidised prices) if he had not had access at the highest level and the additional clout which came from being an ally in good standing? In 1982 New Zealand faced a similar threat in relation to butter. That was settled to the common satisfaction of both governments; but only after Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger intervened effectively at Cabinet level on behalf of a loyal ally. What would happen if a similar situation arose tomorrow? Who in the United States Cabinet could be expected to defend New Zealand's interests? The same sense of diminished obligation exists in other Western capitals. Even in London where, in the past, New Zealand could always be sure it would receive vigorous backing in protecting its trade access to the European Community, support has been moderated by disappointment over Wellington's withdrawal of whole-hearted collective security commitment.

Just as acceptance as a fully committed and trusted ally enhances a nation's ability to protect its political and economic interests among like-minded friends and allies, repudiation of alliance commitment must be expected to reduce the political support which might otherwise have been on call. That message has been made plain to Wellington in the distant attitude taken by the governments of friends and allies whose previous attitude had been invariably welcoming and supportive. It is a heavy

penalty for a nation which depends so much on overseas trade to accept as the price of doctrinaire inflexibility over an issue of less direct application to New Zealand than to almost any other country in the world.

### *THE REASONS FOR PARTING*

De Gaulle's much quoted comment, "Alliances are like flowers and young girls. They last as long as they last." asserts in colourful terms the impermanence of all alliances. It has become almost as common, if more prosaic, to say that any alliance will last only so long as the partners see it serving their national interests. If those two well-worn statements are accepted as accurate, it might be assumed that the reason for New Zealand's present situation is that its populace no longer sees the nation's interests bound up with continued involvement in the ANZUS Treaty.

That is an unconvincing proposition that most New Zealanders would reject, as was made clear by the public outcry when, in April 1989, the then Prime Minister, David Lange, floated the idea that his government might lodge formal advice of New Zealand's intention to withdraw from the ANZUS Council.<sup>7</sup> It is also an interesting fact that, at the same time as the anti-nuclear policies which led to suspension of its active membership were being cemented into place, the most comprehensive nation-wide poll on security issues ever conducted in New Zealand showed that 82 percent of the population favoured the general proposition that New Zealand should form alliances and 71 percent said they supported being within ANZUS.<sup>8</sup> The explanation for New Zealand's adoption of policies which, predictably, took it out of its principal international relationship must be found elsewhere than in a lack of popular regard for alliance membership.

*Loss of National Independence*

One philosophical argument inspiring the more ideologically aware Labour Party members came from the common Socialist assertion that it is impossible to achieve genuine national independence if allied to a powerful capitalist state. The Australian, Dr. Joseph Camilleri, spelled it out in terms attractive to many Labour Party supporters on both sides of the Tasman Sea:

The American connection, by the very fact that it subordinates Australia's political economy to external centres of decision-making, tends to limit the process of political participation, heightens the threat to civil liberties, stifles the development of an authentic indigenous culture, and reduces the prospects for economic self-reliance.<sup>9</sup>

*French Nuclear Testing*

A more direct consideration—and the chosen instrument for change—was widespread anti-nuclearism. What made New Zealanders so concerned about nuclear issues when, because of their remote location and lack of strategic significance, they are possibly the least likely to be affected? It is often suggested that New Zealand's unusually strong aversion to things nuclear stems almost entirely from opposition to the French nuclear test program, conducted in recent years mainly on Mururoa Atoll. That is too simple an explanation. There is, certainly, widespread dislike for the French activities. Powerful opposition is based at least as much on nationalistic objection to what is commonly seen as an "alien intrusion into our part of the world" as on knowledge of, or interest in, the reality of the situation at the test site. Reassuring reports prepared by disinterested scientists, after on-site inspections, cut no ice. The collective mind has been made up and is not prepared to be moved by facts, no matter how authoritative the source. In December 1989, the local representative of Greenpeace proved the point by calling upon the Prime Minister to have Dr. Andrew McEwan, of the National Radiation Laboratory, dismissed for committing the unpardonable heresy of publishing an accurate record of the radiation readings he had made on Mururoa. The accuracy of his facts was not challenged. His unforgivable sin was that he had made



available to the general public evidence which contradicted the protesters' allegations of high radiation counts at the test site. His alleged failing was not that he was professionally incompetent. On the contrary, it was that he had performed his scientific work too well and so "undermined our international credibility."<sup>10</sup>

The moment of Gallic madness when, in 1985, the French intelligence service sank the Greenpeace vessel *Rainbow Warrior* in Auckland Harbour did more to stir up anti-French emotion throughout New Zealand than anything else a rational man might be expected to imagine. Moreover, because of the ship's connection with protest against the French test program on Mururoa, the outrage spilled over into anti-nuclearism. Greenpeace not only gained an upsurge in support from the general public. Through the reparations ordered by the International Court of Justice at the Hague, it obtained funds to buy a more capable ship in which to harass the French. The New Zealand based anti-nuclear/anti-alliance movement also received a fillip when a part of the reparations, paid to the New Zealand government, was handed on to the local branch of the self-styled Peace Movement. Not surprisingly, no similar assistance was offered to those, no less concerned for peace, wanting to make the case for finding national security through alliance and deterrence—and yet the latter is at least equally respected as a practical approach to the prevention of war.

It is not only French testing which has formed anti-nuclear attitudes in New Zealand. Past American and British atmospheric testing in the Pacific and the resulting global anxiety over the health effects of fall-out prepared the way for the more powerful reaction against the French. Moreover, the refusal of New Zealand's nuclear-armed allies to endorse the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (SPNFZ), and their failure either to support regional opposition to the French program or to condemn the act of state terrorism in Auckland Harbour confirmed local opinion that the concerns of small South Pacific nations are of little consequence if it seems they might clash with West European security interests. The fact that any hazards arising from the development of weapons systems intended to protect Western Europe have been transferred to the opposite side of the

globe is widely accepted as further evidence of the Western allies' contempt for the interests of a collection of small nations who, on their own, lack the power to rid themselves of a deeply resented imposition.

### *Nuclear Anxiety*

Over the years, a combination of other factors have reinforced public opposition to the importation of nuclear weapons to the South Pacific. New Zealand's geographic separation from the regions of potential conflict between the great powers and its lack of any apparent direct threat to its own territory is another prime factor. Since the early 1950s the Atlantic nations (especially those within NATO) have seen nuclear weapons as the only realistic guarantee of protection against devastating war on the scale of both World Wars. Conversely, over the same period, many New Zealanders have been inclined to see their safety more seriously threatened by the consequences of a failed nuclear deterrent to Soviet backed aggression against Western Europe.

The temptation to play upon that anxiety has been irresistible. Perhaps the most notable example was Lange's declaration, at a Labour Party conference in Auckland, just two months before his fateful meeting with Mr. Shultz in Manila:

It is, for instance, outrageous to us that the defence of Western Europe is based on NATO's promise to blow up the world if the Russians attack them with overwhelming conventional force.<sup>11</sup>

He found no room to consider a more rational application of the nuclear strategy. Nor was he ready to accept any merit in the paradox of relying on nuclear deterrence as the most sure way of warding off both conventional aggression on a grand scale and nuclear war at any level. At least, that is what that speech would seem to have indicated.

### *Prime Ministerial Ambiguities*

Prime Minister Lange's real position on the deterrent has been hard to fathom. It is, for example, hard to reconcile his uncompromising condemnation of nuclear deterrence, expounded so

vehemently in Auckland, with a more sympathetic judgement on the role of nuclear weapons in preserving Western European peace and freedom, which he delivered a year earlier in a prepared address given in England. At that time he said:

I freely acknowledge that the nuclear deterrent is maintained in good conscience with the honourable intention of preserving the life and freedom of people of Western Europe. Those governments are faced with the close presence of an alien and relentlessly oppressive regime and feel it their duty to prepare for their own defence by membership in a nuclear alliance. This is an assessment which I understand and respect.<sup>12</sup>

The imprint of different hands on the content and tone of his speeches has been apparent. Some were clearly prepared by those whose first concern was to assist him in advancing the national interest; others appeared to be focused on narrower political objectives. Regardless of who drafted the conflicting statements of his position, they all became his responsibility when Lange delivered them. It is up to him, not the authors, to reconcile the contradictions.

#### *The Foreign Minister's Ambivalence*

Other senior members of the Lange government have been equally ambivalent in their positions without suffering public censure from their leader. For example, his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Russell Marshall, included the following comment in a prepared statement he delivered at a Disarmament Meeting in Geneva, in March 1988:

The collective security arrangements which have existed for the past 40 years have made a significant contribution to keeping the world free from conflict on a global scale. The many conflicts that have broken out have been local and regional in nature, and based on the use of conventional and non-nuclear weaponry. They have been no less appalling for that. But for much of that time and for both East and West, *nuclear deterrence has played, and continues to play an important role in those security arrangements and the maintenance*

*of peace at the global level* [emphasis added].<sup>13</sup>

When those comments were reported in New Zealand there was dismay in the ranks of the anti-nuclearists who feared a fundamental shift in Labour Party policy had taken place. Leaders of the local Peace Movement angrily criticised Marshall. The Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Fran Wilde, tried to reassure some of the Labour government's most active supporters by attempting to discredit the journalist's interpretation of the passage drawn from the text of her Minister's address. She claimed the words reported did not imply a shift in policy. They represented "a simple statement of fact. No more or less." His deputy's confirmation that Mr. Marshall acknowledged the practical utility of nuclear deterrence and that, by implication, she agreed with him can have done little to comfort the Peace Movement.

In a press release next day Mr. Marshall expressed outrage that one passage from his speech had been used "to suggest he endorsed or praised nuclear weapons." He pointed out that immediately after the passage in question he had gone on to say,

However, those very efforts to maintain a balance of security have resulted in the commitment of enormous resources and the accumulation of excessive levels of nuclear and conventional arms. This is an untenable position for the international community. We all have a responsibility to find *another* approach to ensuring the maintenance of international security [emphasis added].<sup>14</sup>

Thus in his attack on the newspaper's interpretation of his remarks at Geneva he confirmed his belief that, until a better alternative was found, global security would be underpinned by the nuclear deterrent. That was the key point; not whether he endorsed or was prepared to praise the weapons necessarily relied on for that purpose at this time.

That is where the contradiction all too often lies—and not only in New Zealand. People acknowledging the role of nuclear weapons in restraining conflict, do not suggest any convincing alternative safeguard, and yet recoil from even the

remote possibility of association with the instrument needed to preserve the global security which, one assumes, they, too, value and from which we all benefit. It would be a lot less confusing for both their supporters and those who want to engage them in debate if they would come down clearly on one side or the other.

### *Claims of National Benefit*

Attempts have been made by defenders of the present New Zealand policies to identify national interests which are better served outside the constraints of an operationally effective ANZUS. None ring true. Because New Zealand has adopted regulations and imposed them so inflexibly that, in effect, they prohibit visits by US and British warships, the claim has been made that New Zealand is no longer at risk of nuclear attack. Soon after New Zealand's ejection as an active member of the alliance the Soviet Union tried to reinforce that empty claim by solemnly declaring that, because of New Zealand's anti-nuclear policies, it would no longer be a potential nuclear target. The implication was that New Zealand had previously been on the Soviet nuclear strike plan. That was, of course, nonsense. This was propaganda designed to give a false validity to New Zealand's policies and so help make permanent the restrictions on the freedom of operational deployment of the US and British navies in the South Pacific. There had never been any real likelihood the Soviet Union would identify any potential target in New Zealand as worth the diversion of a nuclear weapon.

In any future nuclear war (improbable as that has been since a mutually deterring balance was attained) the exclusive preoccupation during the initial exchanges would have to be to disarm or, at least, reduce as much as possible the enemy's strategic nuclear capability and so minimize the damage to oneself. None of the weapons systems aboard allied ships which came to New Zealand ever had the range to threaten important Soviet targets from anywhere in the South Pacific, let alone from a New Zealand port. It would be days and, therefore, long after the decisive phase of a nuclear war had been played out before such ships could redeploy to areas in which they could threaten Soviet territory, bases, or strategic forces. By no realistic stretch of the imagination could the classes of warships, with short

range weapons systems, which visited New Zealand in the past, pose a sufficient threat from the remoteness of the South Pacific to justify diversion from that primary aim. New Zealand has no other potential targets which would be likely to attract nuclear attack, no matter what its relations were with the combatants. To suggest otherwise and use that as an important point in trying to justify the present policies simply shows how shallow the case is.

*Labour Party Policy Committee Report*

A report produced by the Labour Party Policy Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security in September 1989 provides a good example of the strength of the anti-alliance sentiment and its influence within the Labour Party. It was prepared in a final effort to overturn a Cabinet committee decision to buy for the Royal New Zealand Navy up to four frigates, to be built in Australia.

The basic thrust of the argument made was that the purchase would undermine what the committee members saw as a nascent independent foreign policy based on New Zealand's anti-nuclear legislation. The contention was that the ships under consideration would retain within the RNZN the ability to operate effectively alongside the Australians and so allow a return to ANZUS at some later date. That was the central point in the committee's opposition to the purchase. The writers protested that "the purchase of the proposed ANZAC frigates will close off this opportunity for independence for the foreseeable future." "The nuclear-free first step towards an independent foreign policy will also be the last step," they warned. Echoing Dr. Camilleri's thoughts, they wrote:

The nuclear-free policy could only be the first step. Of itself it is not a comprehensive foreign policy but an important first step in clearing away dangerous, anachronistic defence relationships which have prevented genuine independence in both foreign and defence policy.<sup>15</sup>

The paper from which these quotations are drawn is probably the most explicit acknowledgement coming from within the

Labour Party policy organisation showing that the anti-nuclear policy (and the manner of its implementation) had always been seen as just the first step in a campaign to get New Zealand out of ANZUS. Many close observers of the manoeuvring which went on from the time the Lange government took power in July 1984 until George Shultz declared a legal separation in June 1986, had long since come to the conclusion that the main purpose throughout was not so much to keep nuclear weapons out of New Zealand as to use anti-nuclearism to get New Zealand out of ANZUS.

### *Rejection of the USS Buchanan*

The central thrust of the committee's report appears to confirm that judgement. The refusal to grant port entry to the USS *Buchanan* cannot be explained adequately on the grounds that it was likely to bear nuclear weapons. The probability that there would have been any nuclear weapons on board at the time of its proposed visit was very low indeed. It is true that, being fitted with ASROC, it was nuclear-capable and so no absolute guarantee could be given without a customs rummage after its arrival. That was not to be considered under the international conventions applied to visiting naval vessels of all nations. But, if an absolute assurance could not be given, the probability that the ship would be nuclear-free at the time of arrival was not much less than 100 percent.

It was reasonable of our allies to see the level of doubt acceptable in New Zealand, as an accurate gauge of the hosts' commitment to meet their obligation under Article 2 of the ANZUS Treaty:

separately and jointly by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid [to] maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.

The decision to turn the *Buchanan* away, therefore, stated a clear and powerful message.

Just consider some of the more obvious facts. The New Zealand government invited the United States to put forward the proposal for a naval visit. The *Buchanan*, which was nominated

after discussions with a New Zealand representative, was one of the older destroyers in the US Pacific Fleet. It was scheduled to visit only Australia, New Zealand, and, possibly, a South Pacific island state on a voyage intended solely to participate in an exercise off Sydney and to make port visits along the way for crew rest and familiarization with operating conditions, port facilities, and allied forces. The ASROC system with which it was fitted, while able to take a small nuclear depth bomb, was known to be armed normally with a conventional acoustic homing torpedo. Only in a situation of the greatest strategic importance could there be any possibility that the use of the nuclear option might be considered. No rational scenario could be envisioned in the South Pacific in which that kind of situation might arise. An added disincentive to loading the nuclear version of ASROC is the fact that despite its low yield, because of the short range of the launching missile, there is a recognized risk that any vessel firing the weapon would itself suffer damage. In fact, it seems likely that the risk of suffering self-inflicted injury if the weapon were ever used was one of the key considerations in the recent decision made to remove ASROC and its sister system SUBROC from service by the end of 1990. Another was the improved effectiveness of non-nuclear anti-submarine weapons systems.

Under the much publicized circumstances of the proposed voyage it was a not unreasonable deduction for allies and friends to make that only a government pleased to accept the prospect of rejection from the alliance would have refused port entry to a ship like the *Buchanan*. The further evidence provided by the Policy Committee's report gives added force to the argument that the manner in which the proposed visit was set up and then declined was all part of a deliberate ploy used to get New Zealand out of the alliance under the cover of anti-nuclearism and without the Labour government having to accept responsibility. It also gives more significance to earlier advice submitted to a Labour Party conference in 1983 at which important points of party campaign policy were considered in the lead up to the elections of 1984.



*The "Rowling" Memorandum*

In an internal memorandum, commonly credited to ex-Prime Minister Sir Wallace (Bill) Rowling, but occasionally ascribed to his ministerial colleague, Richard Prebble, three options for dealing with the question of ANZUS membership were canvassed. They were:

- To support the ANZUS Treaty as it stands.
- To withdraw from ANZUS.
- To seek a review of the Treaty.

The paper acknowledged that the first option "had the advantage of placing the Party in line with what public opinion polls have consistently shown is the majority view that New Zealand should remain within the ANZUS alliance." That apparently decisive consideration was not enough. The writer recognised that many Labour supporters would reject that argument and contend the party should "not be swayed by the current state of public opinion. Instead Labour should seek to educate the public into an anti-ANZUS position." The first option was, therefore, not considered any further.

After making a strong case based on arguments calculated to attract ready party support for the second option it, too, was discarded as electorally hazardous. Perhaps the decisive argument recorded against what might otherwise have been the favoured option was the expedient thought that;

The most important political reason for continuing to support ANZUS is that it would remove a potential electoral liability. If Labour were to adopt an anti-ANZUS position the [National] Government would be likely to make this the key election issue.

The "review" option was therefore recommended. That choice had the added attraction of being in line with the position already taken by the Australian Labour Party. But that was not the end of the matter. Long before the New Zealand elections were due the ground was cut from under the feet of review as a realistic policy. In July 1983 the Australians, led by Foreign Minister Bill Hayden, went through the motions of having a

review of the Treaty conducted at the annual ANZUS Council Meeting held in Washington. After the meeting a communiqué was issued in the name of all three partners recording the fact that a review had been completed and, in effect, confirming the Treaty's continuing validity as it stood. Clearly, it was unlikely there would be any different outcome if a New Zealand government were to go through a similar procedure within a year or two. Review was no longer a convincing option.

At that point another passage in the policy analysis took on greater significance. It had been suggested there might be a less direct route out of ANZUS which by-passed the feared public outrage. The argument ran as follows:

The US policy is to neither confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weaponry on US ships or aircraft. It is argued that should a Labour Government oppose visits by nuclear armed US ships, the consequence would be an end to all visits. To do otherwise, the US maintains, would be to disclose to the Soviet Union which of its craft are nuclear armed.

*A Labour government could respond that if the US did end all ship visits, then it would be Washington and not Wellington that had rendered ANZUS ineffective [emphasis added].*

Whether such a policy was, indeed, adopted may never be known. It could be profitable only if undeclared. To avoid an electoral backlash and buy time "to educate the public into an anti-ANZUS position" (as suggested in the paper) the real agenda would have to be kept hidden. What is more certain is that moves made from the time of the Labour government's election to office in July 1984 have been consistent with there having been such a secret strategy. The contents of the September 1989 Report of the Labour Party Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security imply that the members of that policy influential group, at least, thought so. They recognised the ultimate objective as being to take New Zealand out of ANZUS.

Even if the common assumption that Sir Wallace Rowling was the author of the paper from which the strategy appears to have grown is right, he does not deserve to be held responsible for the anti-ANZUS policy or the way in which it has been

implemented. That was not the recommendation offered in the paper. There is little doubt that he was genuinely astonished by the rejection of the *Buchanan*. By coincidence, as Ambassador-designate to the United States, at the time of the decision he was en route to take up his appointment and had just spent a day in the vicinity of Pearl Harbour talking with American officials in the complacent expectation that the port visit problem would soon be settled. Visions of Secretary of State Cordell Hull's contemptuous dismissal of the duplicitous Japanese emissaries on 7 December 1941<sup>16</sup> may have flashed before him. If so, he need not have feared suffering a similar fate. He was seen as a fellow victim of deceit rather than the author of the act. He went on to fill the position in Washington with credit during a difficult period and to earn a reputation there for straight talking and honest dealing which few of those making policy back in Wellington could be said to share.

### THE ALLIES' REACTION

#### *Bullying and Coercion*

There is a common perception in New Zealand that its allies—and the Americans in particular—have come down far too hard on a small nation with a proud record of contributing to the common good. Words such as “bullying” and “coercion” have been used with little regard for the facts. In the much publicised Oxford Union Debate on 1 March 1985, Lange commented on what he implied was a harsh American response, saying:

to compel an ally to accept nuclear weapons against its wishes is to take the moral position of totalitarianism, which allows for no self-determination.<sup>17</sup>

That accusation of dictatorial bullying, aimed at the nation that, over the past fifty years, has done most and accepted the greatest sacrifices to foster national and personal self-determination

throughout the world was unwarranted, as David Lange belatedly acknowledged in his address at Yale in April 1989. Then, he put the record straight: "What I can never argue is that the United States has been overbearing in its dealings with us."<sup>18</sup>

The honest appraisal came too late. By then, the damage to New Zealand public perceptions of the United States had been done and those in favour of severing the relationship had been strengthened. The temptation to appeal to small nation xenophobia to stifle domestic opposition to the breach in ANZUS had proved irresistible. It was also used as an influential background factor in the 1987 elections.

Contrary to what David Lange had to say when in Oxford, the Americans, so far from trying to force nuclear weapons upon New Zealand or denying the right of self-determination, consistently invited the New Zealand government to decide for itself just what it wanted. Did it want to remain a full participant within ANZUS and, like any other ally, accept occasional visits by allied warships (without the explicit assurance that they would all be free of any form of nuclear weapon) or did it wish to withdraw from the reciprocal obligations of alliance? The choice was spelled out clearly and without any implied threats. There seems no reason to doubt that straightforward advice of intention to withdraw would have been accepted as the legitimate decision of a fellow democratically elected government. The most powerful reaction would have come from within New Zealand, not from overseas. That is how the author of the 1983 memorandum saw it. That may well have been how the inner circle of the New Zealand government also saw it in 1984 and why the tactic of indirect approach was adopted in mounting the attack on alliance.

Although the allies would have regretted the loss of a small but, historically, exceptionally staunch partner, had the decision been made with apparent deliberation and then conveyed privately to them it would have commanded their respect. After all, it is no small thing for any nation, over a matter of principle, to voluntarily give up the security guarantee of the most powerful Western nation and a relationship with it as intimate as that enjoyed by any other Western government. Almost certainly, the separation could, then, have been sorted out without rancour and

under terms designed to minimise the harm done to the two countries' ability to work together as good friends in their common interests.

### *Wellington's Choice*

In retrospect it might be seen that the choice was, indeed, made in Wellington—but not publicly. Nor was it conveyed to the US and British allies in the direct form appropriate to communications between mutually trusting partners and in a way calculated to do the least harm to their wider interests or to long-term relations with New Zealand. In fact, it is hard to imagine a course more certainly destructive of mutual goodwill and trust than that chosen. In terms of international relations it was a disaster for New Zealand. In domestic political terms, however, it was another thing entirely. The anti-alliance members within the Labour Party were delighted, and that promised to hold the party together against the disintegrative forces of the monetarist economic restructuring which was about to be visited upon the nation. Broad public outrage at being removed from the membership roll of allied Western nations could be directed externally rather than at the government which had brought it about. The emotion of nationalism could be used to confuse consideration of the real benefits and disadvantages of the path adopted.

It is hard to imagine a situation in which the visiting warship of a nuclear ally would be less likely to carry nuclear weapons than in the case of the USS *Buchanan*. It was offered for acceptance as a particular ship in particular circumstances. The application for port entry was made with the encouragement of the New Zealand government. The particular ship was nominated after discussion with a New Zealand representative who reported on the basis of its selection. The US Navy had nothing to gain but much to lose if it loaded nuclear weapons for this voyage. There was no apparent operational need for them and, if their presence became known during or after the visit, serious injury would be done to the reputation of the United States—not only in New Zealand.

### *The Non-Declaratory Challenge*

Although Prime Minister Lange insisted throughout that he had

no wish to challenge the non-declaratory policy observed by both the United States and Britain, rejection of the *Buchanan* under the circumstances of the planned visit was tantamount to announcing that an explicit assurance that no nuclear weapon would be carried would be required before any warship from the navy of a nuclear ally would be granted entry. If that was the true measure of certainty required before entry would be approved it was dishonourable to encourage Washington to lodge an application in respect to any warship other than one without any nuclear capable weapon system on board. The point could have been made by the New Zealand government in a forthright statement to its allies before the application was lodged and so the worst of the harm could have been avoided. The United States would then have been spared the international embarrassment of having one of its ships turned away in a highly public spectacle staged by a nation claiming to be a loyal ally.

Excerpts from the Prime Minister's description of the *Buchanan* imbroglio, in the magazine, *The New Zealand Listener*, dated 13 April 1985, are revealing.

*In the face of the New Zealand Government's determination to persist in its intention to exclude nuclear weapons, the US made a request for a port visit by a vessel which appeared to comply with New Zealand's policy [emphasis added].*<sup>19</sup>

The application was made in full agreement between the United States and New Zealand governments. A New Zealand representative was sent to take part in the selection of the ship to be nominated. He reported back more than two months before the formal application was lodged. There was, therefore, no question of the request for port entry being forced upon New Zealand, as might be inferred from the opening phrase. Nor was it presented at short notice. There was ample time to consider the implications of public rejection. In the same sentence, Lange acknowledged that the vessel nominated appeared to comply with New Zealand's policy. Yet it was rejected. Lange claimed:

The American defence posture requires the presentation of their vessels as at any time capable of defensive action with nuclear

weapons, whether or not any given vessel is at any given time nuclear armed.

That is not so. The US policy is not to present its vessels as nuclear armed at all times. It is to decline to guarantee the absence of nuclear weapons from a particular ship at a particular time and so encourage aggression by ruling out any possibility of a nuclear response.

American reluctance to send a vessel to New Zealand which would not only be unarmed with nuclear weapons but which would be seen to be unarmed with nuclear weapons forced the New Zealand Government's hand. To accept a vessel which was *the subject of American assertions as to its nuclear readiness* would effectively defeat the New Zealand policies, whether or not any given vessel was nuclear armed [emphasis added].

As already discussed, the US Navy makes no such assertions. To do so would be in breach of their "neither confirm nor deny policy." The non-declaratory policy is intended to leave an element of uncertainty in the mind of a potential adversary and so require greater caution on his part. It requires him to stand further back from the brink and so reduces the possibility of war by miscalculation. That is to everyone's benefit.

Lange's line of argument acknowledged after the event that, if absolute certainty of the absence of nuclear weapons was required before port entry would be approved, the USS *Buchanan* (since it was nominally nuclear capable) was certain from the outset to be rejected. Its nomination could, therefore, have been turned off in private before the formal application was ever lodged.

The seriousness of the potential damage to allied interests can be better understood if it is remembered that the whole affair took place during a time of great international sensitivity about nuclear weapon deployment issues. The trial of strength between the Soviet Union and the Peace Movement on one side and the NATO allies on the other over the deployment of Pershing 2 and GLCMs to counter the SS-20s was at its most intense stage. A number of NATO members were still equivocating about their

commitment to accept the American weapons, even though their deployment had been approved by the NATO Council and was at the urging of the European members rather than the United States. The "zero option," put forward by the United States in 1981, proposing the removal from Europe of all intermediate range nuclear missiles, had not yet been accepted by Moscow. The Soviet leaders were still probing for weak points in the Western alliance in the hope they might be able to prise open gaps discovered between the rival superpower and its allies. They had still not given up hope that the protests mounted by West European Peace Movements—with active encouragement from the Soviet dominated World Peace Council—might sway the wavering NATO members into declining approval to deploy the counter to the SS-20s.

By turning the port entry issue into a headline grabbing act on the world stage the New Zealand government did nothing to help the Western cause. Nor did it improve the prospects of reaching agreement on nuclear arms reductions. The only country to which it might be expected to give comfort at that unusually critical time was the Soviet Union. Even the PRC representative in Wellington expressed dismay over the breach within ANZUS at a time when solidarity within the Western network of alliances was of such critical importance to containing an expanding Soviet military threat.

### *Reactions of Other Friendly Nations*

The government of no nation with which New Zealand traditionally had a close community of interests spoke up in support of its departure from the ranks of those working in concert to protect Western security. They all found their own security policies prejudiced to some extent by New Zealand's very public challenge to the nuclear deterrent and to the principle of alliance solidarity. In some cases the anger, while muted, was intense.

Japan is a particular example. In their attempt to justify New Zealand's regime for excluding nuclear weapons, some government members made disparaging remarks about the manner in which the equivalent Japanese nuclear exclusion policy was practised. By implication, at least, they questioned the integrity of the Japanese government and the effectiveness of its



anti-nuclear policies. The Japanese media (but particularly those sympathetic to the political opposition) discovered a new-found interest in New Zealand. Journalists were sent down to New Zealand bent on sending back reports calculated to embarrass the government in Tokyo. Lange agreed to be interviewed by some of them. Although, in those interviews, he studiously moderated his anti-nuclear rhetoric, by his involvement he added status and impact to the reports. In accordance with Japan's cultural disdain for making a scene, its government said little in public. It is, however, noteworthy that, at the time of writing, no New Zealand prime minister had been accepted on a visit to Japan since the time of the Buchanan affair. Japan being one of New Zealand's principal trading partners with the most buoyant economy in the world, the harm done to New Zealand's political and economic interests must have been substantial.

In a meeting with Lange in Singapore in March 1985 (that is, just over a month after the *Buchanan* had been rejected), Minister of Foreign Affairs Suppiah Dhanbalan remonstrated in terms typical of an attitude common throughout the region:

New Zealand appears to be on the periphery of world affairs. It is, in fact, not. A ripple effect from New Zealand's nuclear free port policy could spread and affect the South East Asian region's long-term security.<sup>20</sup>

### *The Australian Response*

Australia, New Zealand's closest ally in both geographic and historic terms, moved quickly to make its position plain. On 4 March 1985 Prime Minister Hawke called off the impending ANZUS Council Meeting, saying, "ANZUS is not dead but as a trilateral agreement it exists in name only."<sup>21</sup> Foreign Minister Hayden followed up later, commenting that he expected "there would be no further ANZUS meetings until New Zealand changed its attitude."<sup>22</sup>

Lange's response, when asked by a journalist to comment, provided an interesting insight into the strategy his government intended to pursue. All responsibility for New Zealand's departure from ANZUS was to be sheeted home to the United States—no matter how clearly Australia might have stated its

position on the incompatibility of port restrictions and alliance membership, nor how plainly the exile was self-imposed. Lange was adamant he had not been let down by the Australian Prime Minister. As he explained it, "Australia made the decision at the behest of the United States... The USA is turning the rack a degree."<sup>23</sup>

### *Moderate Response*

Considering the provocation offered by the manner in which the New Zealand government handled the proposed visit by the *Buchanan*, the allies principally affected (the United States and Britain) might fairly claim to have reacted with moderation. The restraints put in place were limited to the fields in which provocation was seen to have been deliberately given. That is, Defence cooperation was circumscribed—but not terminated—by both allies in direct response to New Zealand's decision to limit its cooperation with units of their armed forces. In addition, the United States administration applied restrictions on formal contact with ministers and senior representatives of those New Zealand ministries which were directly involved in what Washington could be excused for believing was premeditated deceit. It explains why they remain shy about entering into further discussions with the members of the New Zealand government in an effort to find a mutually more beneficial accommodation. They have been bitten once.

### *Grand Deception?*

To many Americans (and, probably, Britons) the whole sorry affair must have looked like a grand deception. It is, perhaps, surprising they did not react more strongly. Possibly their hands were stayed by memories of past New Zealand contributions to the common cause. If so, it is a sad waste to have used up so carelessly the respect and acceptance earned through decades of shared sacrifice in support of common Western democratic interests. It is all the more disturbing that few of those responsible for the abrupt change of direction played any part in building up the capital of goodwill which was so quickly squandered.

*THE CHANGING WORLD*

The New Zealand/United States relationship should not be considered in isolation or solely in terms of the situation in the South Pacific. Nor should New Zealand's need for powerful friends be judged only in the context of defence. The world is in a turmoil of change. Much of that change appears to offer new hope of retreat from the abyss of superpower collision. Not all is so promising. The great changes we are seeing may herald an end to the East/West division into mutually defensive military blocs. They do not rule out the possibility of international conflict. In some respects they increase that danger. Nor do they eliminate the benefits of collective security arrangements to foster stability, reinforce confidence, and encourage cooperation.

The sudden collapse of Leninist/Stalinist Communism and, with it, the Soviet East European empire, has encouraged many to proclaim that assured and lasting peace has finally arrived. If we are lucky their vision may, one day, become reality. But, eager as we all are to see it dawn, that day is not yet lighting the sky. Some in their present euphoria, argue there is no further purpose in alliance. Before accepting that proposition we will need to be convinced that some more effective method has been devised and put in place to guarantee continuance of regional and global peace than the system of collective defence that was fundamental to getting us where we are. Premature abandonment of the present network of collective security alliances could put at risk all that has been gained through 45 years of common resolve and shared effort. The most remote of nations would be affected.

Superpower confrontation may, indeed, have been put to one side. The Soviet Union is, today, in no state to threaten anyone. It is involved in a new revolution which is tearing it apart. The resulting social chaos is going to preoccupy Soviet leaders for years as they try to put the pieces back into some kind of ordered arrangement. But that does not mean that international dispute and conflict can be dismissed. As the superpowers cut their military strength the possibility of secondary powers lashing out will increase. The moderating consideration of

superpower intervention to curb aggression will then be less convincing.

In any case, alliance is not a narrow and rigidly circumscribed relationship between the contracting nations. In an increasingly turbulent and unpredictable world, in which the exclusive economic and political groupings foreseen by Orwell could well form, alliance membership which guarantees broad mutual support could prove more important in the next few decades than in the recent past.

The tumultuous events in the Soviet Union and East Europe are more than just part of a riveting piece of street theatre for the citizens of distant lands to watch as an appreciative but uninvolved audience. The next acts of the drama will have world-wide effects on political and economic stability. The disintegration before our eyes of the global balance of power removes one source of great concern with which we have lived for 45 years—superpower confrontation—only to replace it with a wider range of worrying possibilities. The world is not safer because one of the superpowers, in attempting to reconstruct itself has, like a dying star, begun to collapse inwards and, in the process, left its East European empire in confused disarray—in parts almost ungovernable.

The future world is likely to be much more unpredictable than when unquestioned bipolarity gave clear points of reference for the resolution of all major issues. Management of potential conflict of national interests is going to be more difficult—the dependability of agreements more uncertain. And the revolutionary changes racking the world, while most obvious in East Europe, are not confined to that region. Asia is in a turmoil of democratization and breath-taking economic growth. The South Pacific too is facing political instability as it grapples with the combined problems of inadequate resources, the resurgence of tribalism, and the hangover from recent colonial domination.

The European Community as a bloc is New Zealand's most valuable trading partner. Burgeoning Asia to the north has the potential to be both expanding market for farm products and formidable competitor in manufactured goods. How all the present turmoil settles will be vital to New Zealand's future. This is no time for a small nation, its security affected by

strategic developments well beyond its own region and its prosperity heavily dependent on worldwide trade access, to be on the outside, unheard in the global clamour and, so, both less well protected and more likely to be left out of the politico/economic reshaping of the world. Let us, therefore, examine the possibility of New Zealand reentering the fold of full ANZUS membership.

## II. PROSPECTS FOR RECONCILIATION



SECRETARY BAKER'S UNEXPECTED DECISION to reopen high-level contacts was portrayed in New Zealand as heralding a return to close political relationship. In fact, the move effectively killed any prospects there may have been of early reconciliation between the three ANZUS partners and a renewal of the old intimacy New Zealand had enjoyed with the United States.

Until that day (1 March 1990), it had been thought that Washington had tied recovery of high level access to satisfactory resolution of the port visit issue. By abandoning that linkage, if only in part, Baker removed the most compelling political argument for New Zealand to moderate its present requirement that every allied warship entering one of its ports must first be declared free of any form of nuclear weapon. Baker's policy adjustment could be seen as a clear signal that Washington was no longer much interested in recovering the previous alliance relationship. It was reconciled to accepting a more limited form of association, with no mutual security connotations, and wished to register that position well before the next elections in New Zealand.

That was, in effect, how the New Zealand media and the National opposition party interpreted the Secretary of State's unexpected change in policy. The prospects for reconciliation received a heavy blow which, in time, may prove to have been fatal. The State Department—apparently deliberately—has now placed the United States/New Zealand relationship on a lower plane than that with Australia or with any other traditional US allies.

There was ample time to think through the implications before acting. Washington had almost four years within which to consider how and when it should make any adjustment to the relationship. In addition, the change was made not more than seven months before parliamentary elections were due to be held in New Zealand. On the basis of repeated public opinion polls,

there was a common assumption there would be a change of government in Wellington at that time. The National Party (which would then take over) had committed itself to amend the present nuclear exclusion law to the extent necessary to allow ship visits and so return to a full role within the ANZUS alliance. The Secretary must have been well aware of that prospect and the effect his move was likely to have. The signal which he intended to send by his decision to reopen ministerial contacts at that time had to be judged against that background.

Moreover, since the decision affected national security policy, it was reasonable to believe that, unless there had been some overriding requirement for urgency, the Secretary of State would have first raised the question in the National Security Council, where his colleagues would have the opportunity to advise the President. There was no apparent need for urgency in this case. For lack of any contrary evidence, Baker's decision to reopen contacts could, therefore, be seen in New Zealand only as a studied statement of a significant new US policy direction undertaken with the knowledge and endorsement of all affected members of the administration.

It would now seem that the only circumstances under which New Zealand might return to alliance with the United States would arise if the nuclear powers agreed to remove all nuclear weapons from warships of the classes likely to be nominated to visit New Zealand or if the Neither Confirm Nor Deny policy were abandoned. Neither can be ruled out as a future possibility. Equally, neither is commonly expected to be agreed in the present round of the START discussions.

Those are not the only impediments to reconciliation. Should they be removed and the majority of New Zealanders decide the time has come to find a middle way which offers a better balance in the nation's international relationships, it will not be a simple matter of Wellington advising its allies that it intends to take up again a full role within ANZUS. There are three partners to the ANZUS Treaty. All must agree before New Zealand can return to full participation in alliance affairs. Acceptance would not be automatic. Both of the other members would have to be satisfied reentry would not prejudice their wider interests and that, this time, New Zealand would prove a

fully dependable partner. Each is more likely to be swayed by the views and wishes of the other loyal partner than by New Zealand's representations. A valid assessment of the prospects for a return to full alliance must, therefore, consider the likely attitudes in each of the three capitals.

### *THE AMERICAN ATTITUDE*

Secretary Baker's apparent decision to write New Zealand off as an ally came as a shock to those New Zealanders who had remained convinced their nation's return to ANZUS would benefit all three partners and its return would be encouraged by the United States. To them his move appeared to be a deliberate act of abandonment.

Perhaps the move should not have been unexpected. Why should the United States care? The South Pacific is an area of very low strategic importance at this time. There is no evidence to suggest that condition is likely to change in the foreseeable future. In US terms, New Zealand brings little military power to the alliance. In addition, the United States now need make no provision to help New Zealand in the currently unlikely event it (or its armed forces elsewhere in the Pacific) were to be attacked. That is at least one small part of US global security commitments that can be rubbed off the slate. In a defence sense, it could, therefore, be argued that the United States would lose little if the present situation were left to stand.

Politically, it is much the same story. With New Zealand no longer an active partner within ANZUS, the United States is spared the embarrassment of having to balance an ANZUS member's appeals for support in its sporadic disputes with America's greater West European ally, France, as they wrangle over nuclear testing and post-colonial activities in the South Pacific. The longer New Zealand has been seen by other nations as an inactive member of ANZUS, out of official favour in Washington, the less relevant its views become to them as they



develop their own positions on important Western policy issues. New Zealand's ability to be a useful partner to the United States in influencing world political opinion has shrunk accordingly. It might have been expected, therefore, that sooner or later Washington would write New Zealand off as an ally and move on to more important issues.

### *Long Official Contact*

US contact with New Zealand goes back to the earliest days of settlement. In fact, it started before formal annexation by Britain in February 1840. Until then British interests in New Zealand had been loosely administered by London through the Governor of New South Wales (on the East coast of Australia) some 1,400 nautical miles away. Earlier in the 19th century American whalers and sealers, operating out of New England ports had worked the rich New Zealand waters. In 1839 an American consul was appointed in the Bay of Islands (the main centre of European population at that time) to oversee the interests and attempt to control the activities of US citizens. His was the first consular appointment in New Zealand.

In honour of that event and the subsequent uninterrupted official contact, in 1989, the New Zealand Embassy in Washington began to overprint its letterheads with "150 Years of United States/New Zealand Friendship." Perhaps the device was intended to serve, in the main, as a gentle rebuke for the situation in which senior embassy representatives had been held at arms length, but there were many in both countries who responded readily to what they saw as no more than an accurate recording of shared history.

### *Shared Heritage*

The two nations, so different in size and power, share more in common than most. Each has a history of settlement by displaced Europeans, generally of modest means but formidable energy and enterprise, who turned a sparsely populated wilderness into a well-ordered nation. Those settlers brought with them a deep-rooted determination that the new societies they built would throw off the class system of the old world they had left, in favour of true egalitarianism. Both succeeded. That shows in

the ready acceptance of vertical mobility common to both societies. Each, also, has a fierce sense of sovereign independence which will brook no outside interference in the management of its own affairs.

Not all the two nations share is cause for pride. Both are scarred by earlier mistreatment of the original inhabitants of the lands their forebears settled. Today, both continue to wrestle with the perplexing difficulties of trying to find remedies which offer justice to the whole population for errors and wrongs committed to and by other generations in different circumstances, more than a century ago. In both cases the original people were displaced from their ancestral lands, and the structure of their close tribal communities destroyed, by the more powerful European societal organisation and weapons. Their descendants continue to suffer disadvantage arising from that traumatic experience.

Even in the treatment of indigenous people, however, the record is not all bad. There has been much good provided by European settlement. Some of the harm suffered has been, and remains, self-inflicted. A common difficulty is to find a true balance by which to measure the relative benefits and disadvantages wrought by the process of settlement and so assess a fair reconciliation of the debt. The two nations have much in the way of experience and ideas to offer one another as they grapple with the complex human problems thrown up by their similar historical origins.

### *Wartime Allies*

The record of comradeship in arms has been paraded too often to need a long historical review. American and New Zealand troops fought alongside one another in both World Wars, Korea, and Vietnam believing, in each case, they were accepting the sacrifices of war in the greater cause of helping to prevent the spread of aggressive totalitarianism. At this time, as totalitarian regimes throughout the world collapse before the surge of a tidal wave of freedom set off by the political earthquake in the Soviet Union and East Europe, the complacent expectation grows that there will be no more armed challenges to the liberal democratic concept of government. As that complacency grows so will

regard for past comradeship in arms fade. But should another powerful authoritarian state arise—as history suggests will happen, sooner or later—bent on imposing its political will by use of force, the now disregarded benefits of collective security would hold renewed appeal; especially for the small nations of the world. Then the record of United States-New Zealand partnership in war or threat of war will again take on meaning.

From the time raw American troops were moved into the New Zealand and Australian trenches in France in 1917, for familiarisation with the new methods of war before they were flung into action, to the shared experience of Vietnam, there had been forged between the servicemen of the two nations an abiding mutual regard. General John Vessey (by coincidence, Chairman of the US Chiefs of Staff when the ship visit dispute blew up), would reminisce that he shared a foxhole with a congenial New Zealand infantryman before going into action for the first time in Italy. The memory and all it implied stayed with him. In the most anxious days in the Pacific theatre of World War II, a special bond was formed within a wider cross-section of the two nations. That bond is still strongly evident among the veterans of the 1st and 2nd Divisions of the US Marine Corps who return on regular pilgrimages to where they completed their training, embarked for the Pacific campaign and (those who survived) returned for medical treatment and rest. The link remains just as important to New Zealanders who, remembering the wartime contacts of those and other times, are pleased to welcome them on return.

### *The Essential Requirement*

There can be few nations with more in common than the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The present security stand-off between the largest and smallest of that group should be seen for what it is—an unrealistic situation which demands sensible resolution. A return to something like the old relationship may be much more important to New Zealand than the United States but, even to the latter, there would be real benefits to be gained. However, there are other important factors to be considered. Australia's attitude will be crucial. The possible impact upon America's wider security relationships will also be

influential. It is, therefore, not a simple matter for agreement between the United States and New Zealand alone.

In a congratulatory comment on Geoffrey Palmer's elevation to the position of Prime Minister, in August 1989, a Washington spokesman for the State Department made the American position on reconciliation with New Zealand clear in the following statement:

The United States looks forward to productive development under [Mr Palmer's] leadership. As we have said many times, the United States would welcome New Zealand's return to full participation in the ANZUS alliance. This can be achieved, however, only in terms acceptable to both countries, [and] recognizing United States global security responsibilities.<sup>1</sup>

In March 1990, when invited to comment on "the National Party's abandonment of its pro-ANZUS position," a representative of the State Department (in a prepared response) reconfirmed the wish to recover a more productive form of relationship:

This decision is, of course, within the discretion of the National Party. We regret any decision that will prevent restoration of full confidence and cooperation between the United States and New Zealand. We remain committed to collective defence and would welcome New Zealand's participation in ANZUS on mutually agreeable terms. We believe that the success in global and regional arms control and the dramatic movement toward democracy in Eastern Europe have been made possible by the solidarity of the Western Alliance. We would hope New Zealand will rejoin us as a full partner in this process.

Regardless of the message taken so quickly in New Zealand from Baker's initiative, it might be seen that the United States has not yet given up on New Zealand and the possibility of reconciliation. At this time, there seems little possibility of such a move; the National party's change of heart could be seen as screwing down the lid on that coffin.

Until there is some radical new agreement reached

between the world's nuclear powers on the carriage of tactical nuclear weapons at sea, one of the essential requirements will be to retain some measure of ambiguity about their possible presence on visiting warships. The solution proposed by National after long consideration within the Party—but abandoned so precipitately during the first shock of Secretary Baker's initiative—appeared to meet that requirement while, at the same time, keeping to a very low level the probability that any nuclear weapon would ever be carried on a visiting warship. The proposal would, therefore, seem to have promised to meet both nations' essential needs (although providing neither with what it would see as a perfect solution), and so offered the basis for entering into discussions with confidence that, in a spirit of sensible compromise, a mutually acceptable solution could be agreed. But whether a solution could have been worked out on that basis appears destined to remain no more than unproductive speculation about what might have been.

### *New Zealand Has Something to Offer*

There is much more to the relationship than memories and shared domestic problems. New Zealand is more than a scenically beautiful country in which Americans can be confident of finding a range of fine outdoor recreation, clean air, and a friendly welcome. The country has a useful contribution to make to shared interests in the South Pacific and beyond.

New Zealand has closer connections to almost all South Pacific states than does the United States. There has been a steady pattern of migration from the islands to New Zealand for many years. Today, it is claimed, because of past migration, Auckland contains the largest group of Polynesians in the world. Links between the migrants and their home communities remain strong. Funds are remitted home from New Zealand by the more prosperous family members. There is much movement to and fro. Inevitably, New Zealanders have a more reliable understanding of what is going on in the South Pacific and what needs to be done to improve the economic situation and so encourage stability. Moreover, because of its less overwhelming scale, New Zealand is more readily accepted as a partner, able to comprehend the basic problems and anxieties

of the island communities.

While, in comparison with the United States, New Zealand has very small armed forces, in South Pacific terms they are substantial and able to offer their smaller neighbours valued assistance through the provision of security support, surveillance of Exclusive Economic Zones, and aid following natural disasters. New Zealand air and naval maritime patrols, mounted regularly throughout the area, also make a useful contribution to the common store of current information on external interest and activities within the South Pacific. Those patrols would be even more productive and mutually valuable if the present disagreement could be settled well enough to reopen a more free flow of intelligence upon which to plan routes with the highest possible probability of intercepting foreign vessels.

#### *Antarctic Support Base*

That is not to say that, in the present strained circumstances, New Zealand is without practical value to the United States. If nothing else, it provides a useful stepping stone from which to dispatch logistic support to American scientific research in the Antarctic. The main US airlift to Antarctica is mounted through Christchurch, in the South Island of New Zealand, by far the closest well developed airport to the American base at McMurdo Sound. The arrangement suits both countries. Christchurch provides the most convenient and economical airhead to support the US Antarctic research activity. On the other hand, the operation attracts substantial American expenditure to Christchurch and the New Zealand Antarctic research program benefits from the cooperative logistic arrangements which have been established over the years.

There has been concern on both sides that difficulties arising from the ship visit dispute might put a stop to the operation. But the use of Christchurch airport is not in jeopardy today. In fact, there has never been any real threat to US access to the staging post. For years there has been opposition mounted by a small local group of inveterate anti-American protesters, who were encouraged to greater efforts and ever more fanciful allegations of American villainy as the ANZUS row developed. For all their endeavours, the transshipment facilities remained in

unrestricted use throughout the worst of the inter-governmental dispute.

Today, the operation seems more solidly based than ever. During 1989 new plans were developed in Christchurch to improve the support facilities available at the airport in an effort to cement in place the city's position as "the gateway to the Antarctic." It is most unlikely the New Zealand government would willingly do anything that might prejudice the continued American use of the expensive new facilities. The fact that Prime Minister Palmer and a number of other senior Labour members hail from Christchurch is a practical guarantee of continued access. Their electoral prospects could be hurt if the local economy suffered through the pursuit of policies that could be seen as encouraging the United States to take its business elsewhere.

Concern that the United States might desert Christchurch is not an idle fancy. In 1986 the US navy studied the possibility of developing the smaller airport at Hobart (capital of the most southerly Australian state, Tasmania) to evaluate its suitability as a replacement for Christchurch. There were obvious disadvantages. The runway would have to be extended to support heavy weight take-offs for the long haul down to the ice. Much larger ramp areas able to take high loads would have to be built to park the large fleet that would be on the ground being loaded and refueled during the height of the fly-in season. New administrative and servicing facilities would also have to be built. Such work would be expensive and time-consuming, taking, perhaps, as much as two years.

The annual recurring costs of operating from Hobart would also be higher. The most serious disadvantage identified was, almost certainly, that the increased range from the US base at McMurdo Sound in Antarctica would increase the flying time required to make each round trip and decrease the load carried. Since the length of the fly-in season is constrained by the period between the annual construction of an ice runway and when it breaks up as the summer advances, the only solution would be to use more aircraft to make more flights.

There would, of course, have been some benefits to balance those disadvantages. The move would have concentrated in

Australia all of the major US regional activities and that might have been expected to generate cost savings. The greatest attraction of withdrawal from Christchurch would, no doubt, have been to demonstrate very clearly the extent of the US displeasure with New Zealand and its high regard for Australia. The then Secretary of the Navy, John Lehman, appeared more strongly attracted to that line of thought than most in Washington. He moved on in 1988 after an occasionally stormy tenure. Nothing more has been heard of the Hobart proposal since he left office.

Plainly, it is in the interests of both nations to keep the American "Deep Freeze Operation," currently based in Christchurch, separate from the ANZUS disagreement. Both governments have been at pains to keep it that way. But transfer to Hobart at some future time cannot be ruled out entirely. For all its disadvantages, the move might still be used as a weapon with which to inflict public punishment should new sourness creep into the relationship. One possible trigger would be if, under the policies now adopted by National (of explicitly rejecting the non-declaratory policy), New Zealand were perceived to tighten its restraints on the entry of US ships or demand an assurance that all aircraft operating through New Zealand in support of Operation Deep Freeze were nuclear free.

#### *Limited American Interest*

It is, perhaps, fortunate that few Americans have seen the failure of the New Zealand relationship as an important issue. If more did, the reaction to what many consider was a deliberate slight to the US Navy and an attack on their nation's security interests might have been less restrained. The first essential fact for New Zealanders to understand is that those Americans interested in relations with New Zealand make up a small and shrinking part of the US government. The others lost interest some time ago. They have found more substantial issues to hold their attention. It should also be understood that in the United States it is in government circles alone that opinions influential to full resolution of the present stand-off exist. The split within ANZUS is not an issue of domestic political consequence; nor could it be made so. Very few voters know much about the matter and even fewer are



interested in what happens next.

If, at some time in the future, New Zealand decides that, in its wider national interest, it needs to find a more comfortable and productive defence relationship with the United States, there will be only one channel open. It will have to seek reconciliation through discussion with that relatively small body in the administration and Congress who influence policy. They, in turn, will be prepared to talk seriously only when convinced the New Zealand government is genuinely prepared to honour the mutual obligations of collective security rather than merely seeking a self-serving solution to the immediate problem of ship visits.

Except for those Americans who were involved in the earlier attempt to find a mutually acceptable solution (who still feel they were let down by the way it was handled in Wellington) the most common reaction encountered in the United States is puzzlement. "What does New Zealand believe it has gained to balance the loss of a close working relationship with the United States?" There is almost no continuing resentment at being spurned, except within the US Navy where some still take the rejection personally. On the few occasions New Zealand attracts US attention, there is apparent a remarkably deep well of goodwill for a small nation with which many Americans feel they can easily identify and about which they have favourable, if vague, impressions. The shared democratic ideals and record of commitment to the advancement of national and individual freedom has forged bonds which are, on balance, stronger than the force of the present disagreement that holds the two governments apart.

#### *Basis for the Secretary's Decision*

If Baker's announcement of the decision to reopen inter-governmental contacts at a high level was, indeed, a studied statement of the administration's new attitude to New Zealand, cleared in advance with those of his colleagues charged with specific security responsibilities, the National Party proposal is dead in the water and about to sink without trace, first torpedoed by Baker and then scuppered by the crew before being abandoned. But there are indications that the Secretary of State's initiative was made without the customary interagency consultation

and agreement. A number of people within the US government have suggested that the Secretary acted without consulting his NSC colleagues or his own senior staff.

Baker's integrity had been called into question in the course of the Congressional enquiry into the circumstances surrounding the two visits to Peking. It was suggested that he had, either deliberately or inadvertently, misled Congress to conceal the early covert mission. Although not much was made of it, he must have felt deeply wounded by the need to explain his actions to Congress. Then Congressman Stephen Solarz published a scathing article in which he criticized the administration's readiness to pursue contacts with Peking while ostracizing Wellington.<sup>2</sup> Other members of Congress began to take up the cry and join the hunt.

A question from Senator Boschwitz in the course of Secretary Baker's testimony before the Senate Budget Committee, on 28 February 1990, suggested the line of criticism was going to be extended and prolonged. It seems possible that the further evidence of a continuing personal vulnerability to niggling criticism triggered an impromptu decision on Baker's part. It is clear that both the United States embassy in Wellington and its New Zealand counterpart in Washington were taken by surprise by the unexpected decision to meet next day with a visiting New Zealand Minister. Baker also implied that the decision to renew some high level contacts was his alone and that it affected only meetings with his counterpart:

We find ourselves on the same side of drug issues, narcotics issues, and other things, and I think it shortsighted for us to say that we cannot have any high level political contacts. *I intend, as far as I am concerned, to resume contacts with my counterpart* [emphasis added].

The sudden change of course was all the more surprising in light of Secretary Baker's firm rejection, barely three months earlier, of an Australian suggestion he should consider just such a move. He must also have had in mind Prime Minister Hawke's earthy repudiation of the unauthorized Australian proposal. On the basis of the evidence available it seems likely that the

Secretary's decision to make a move in respect to New Zealand did not carry the full authority of the Administration. There is, for example, no present indication that the renewed access will extend to the White House, even though the President did not demur when informed by his Secretary of State, on the night before the meeting, of his intention to meet with the New Zealand Minister of External Relations and Trade, the Hon. Michael Moore.

A State Department representative has since argued that the presidential acquiescence, under those circumstances, "left no reason to send it through an interagency process."<sup>3</sup> Technically, that may be so. It is far from certain that representatives of other key departments agree the abbreviated procedure was an adequate substitute for the customary, more deliberate process of consultation. The breadth of support within the administration for the Secretary's initiative and the extent of the high level contacts which will actually take place will be known only as they are demonstrated.

The adjustment to US policy may have been intended to be minor and carefully constrained. The result was far-reaching. Almost overnight, the National Party decided to adopt the Labour Party's policies on ship visits and so, effectively, abandon its policy of returning to the alliance. By softening its political sanctions without any change on New Zealand's part the Department of State appeared to have conferred a new legitimacy upon anti-nuclearism. In fact, as far as Washington is concerned, the adoption of inflexible anti-nuclear policies by both major political parties in a Western oriented nation is an unwelcome new development. National's dramatic reversal was seen widely, within Washington and the capitals of America's major allies, as the predictable direct consequence of Baker's move to ease access at a sensitive time in New Zealand's political life.

Tokyo and Canberra were said to have lodged stiff complaints over the unwelcome change of policy in Washington and the lack of prior consultation with loyal allies who stood to be adversely affected. That embarrassing reaction may moderate any thoughts the Secretary of State had of widening the scope of the renewed access. In that event, high level contacts will, most likely, be restricted to the occasional constrained discussion of a

narrow range of topics. If that proves to be the case, the new relationship will be a far cry from that which existed when New Zealand was a fully accepted ally.

### *THE AUSTRALIAN ATTITUDE*

A major obstacle for New Zealand to surmount in any move to recover a full role within ANZUS has been Australia's reluctance to accept anything less than the adoption of its own open port policy. Throughout the dispute its attitude towards reconciliation has been, at best, ambivalent. The Americans have, of course, been especially attentive to Australian representations. After all, they know which nation proved dependable when it mattered. That is, when the campaign against the counter-deployment of American missiles within West Europe was at its height. Unlike New Zealand, Australia still has debts to call in.

#### *No Compromise Recommended*

From July 1984, when Labour came to power in New Zealand and began putting in place its unqualified anti-nuclear policies, Australia did all it could to convince the United States and Britain that there should be no easy compromise allowed. In public, Canberra has played the part of the disapproving but sympathetic friend, ready to speak up on behalf of its trans-Tasman cousins when necessary to moderate what is implied would otherwise have been more harsh American and British reaction. In private, it has shown much less sympathy.

In January 1985, during the lead up to a decision on the *Buchanan*, in a confidential letter to his colleague, Lange, Prime Minister Hawke summed up the bottom-line Australian position when he wrote, Australia "could not accept as a permanent arrangement, that the ANZUS alliance had a different meaning, and entailed different obligations for different members." Notably, that personal letter was leaked to the world media at a critical point in the delicate discussions over a ship visit to New

Zealand and was used to portray Australia as applying some heavy-handed pressure on behalf of its other ANZUS partner. While the contemptible person who betrayed the confidentiality of personal communications between heads of government was not identified it is significant that the only faction to benefit was the one intent on torpedoing the *Buchanan* and so increasing the probability that New Zealand would be cast out of ANZUS.

### *The Softer Line*

In May 1985, in a major speech in the Australian House of Representatives, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bill Hayden, followed Australia's public supportive position of New Zealand when he said, *inter alia*:

There is no escaping the fact that New Zealand's policies on nuclear shipping have given the ANZUS arrangement a great shake....

That said, our different perception is not enough cause for us to bring out bell book and candle against New Zealand, as some armchair critics are urging us to do. It is hard to think of two countries anywhere in the world whose ties are closer. Blood is thicker than water. Australia and New Zealand have certainly spilled enough of it together. We have been through too much together to walk away from each other over such an issue.<sup>4</sup>

More recently, Senator Gareth Evans, the succeeding Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, again played the "soft cop" role when, at the annual ANZUS Council Meeting held in Sydney in November 1989, he twice suggested it was time the United States considered easing its restrictions on meetings with senior New Zealand political and military representatives. The report released in Sydney and published in New Zealand was headlined, "Aussie Plea for US Thaw towards NZ." The first sentence read, "The United States today rebuffed an Australian approach aimed at restoring top-level political contacts with New Zealand."<sup>5</sup> Predictably (at that time), the Secretary of State replied that "this was not the right time to change defence policy" in that respect.<sup>6</sup> It is understood that Prime Minister Hawke promptly dissociated himself from Senator Evans' suggestion.

He is said to have made it plain he did not believe any show of tolerance towards anti-nuclearism would be helpful in his efforts to minimize local opposition to the port entry of potential nuclear weapon carriers.

After the meeting, when questioned by journalists, a senior Australian representative said that "Senator Evans had not urged action by the United States but had simply raised the matter as an assist [sic] for New Zealand."<sup>7</sup> If that statement has any meaning, it surely is that Senator Evans knew his suggestion would be rejected and made it for other than the obvious reason of easing relations between Australia's two allies.

The effect of Senator Evans' intervention was to claim the role of peacemaker while doing nothing which might be expected to assist New Zealand to get back into the alliance. There is reason to believe the idea was fed into Senator Evans' brief by a Foreign Affairs official who saw it serving Australia's longer-term interests. A cynic might say that if the United States had agreed to Senator Evans' suggestion Australia would have been well on the way to achieving its twin objectives of improving New Zealand's international political situation—and so making it a more useful partner—while keeping it out of ANZUS and, therefore, less of a nuisance to Australia in that country's bilateral relationship with the United States. In the process, Australia was made to look good in New Zealand and the myth of America's sole responsibility for its isolation was reinforced. Senator Evans' suggestion may have been good trans-Tasman politics but it was unlikely to be so well received across the Pacific.

### *The Focus on Political Reacceptance*

The Australians understand that, in New Zealand, the main focus of public concern over the present breach with the United States and Britain has not been centered on the loss of a defence guarantee against an unlikely (but never impossible) armed attack. Rather, the focus has been on the extent to which its politicians' loss of full acceptance in the United States (and other major Western-oriented nations) has degraded their ability to protect the nation's interests. It is possible the unnamed Australian official calculated that if the Secretary agreed to reinstate

much of Wellington's political access, most New Zealanders (not just the anti-alliance faction within the Labour Party) would be prepared to give up on any attempt to return to the ANZUS relationship. If that was indeed the line of reasoning, events since Secretary Baker met Minister Moore have proved it to have been a shrewd estimate of the final outcome. Conversely, he might have calculated that if the United States rejected the suggestion, Australia, through its show of concern, would gain in its relationship with New Zealand. No matter how Baker responded, it might appear Australia stood to benefit.

The Foreign Affairs staff reasoning overlooked one essential consideration—which Prime Minister Hawke was quick to point out with force. A show of tolerance to New Zealand's restrictions on ship visits and its tepid commitment to the discharge of alliance obligations, would be expected to encourage those of similar inclination in Australia. Such a development would be politically unwelcome to the leadership of the ALP and put at risk highly important security interests shared with the United States. It is to be expected that Hawke would have seized the opportunity to explain to the Secretary of State the reasons for his concern and to seek assurance that the State Department would not initiate any move of the kind suggested by his subordinate without first consulting him. Vital Australian interests would be affected.

### *The Australian Public's Regard for Alliance*

In general, it is fair to say that Australians have a more deep-seated regard for alliance membership than New Zealanders. That is, perhaps, to be expected. History and geography have both played their parts in forming the different attitudes. In Australia, memories of the Japanese threat of invasion in 1942 and the sense of the vast but sparsely populated nation's vulnerability are indelible. The air attacks on Darwin and the submarine raid in Sydney Harbour drove home the message. Australian troops were engaged in long and heavy fighting in defence of Australia's trusteeship territories in Papua New Guinea. New Zealand, on the other hand, was spared the direct impact of war on its own territory. The intense anxiety of 1942 faded the more quickly for that. Australia's proximity to Asia and its sense of its

own importance in the scheme of things protects it from the self-effacement that underlies New Zealand's readiness to withdraw into modest obscurity in the hope any future conflict will pass it by.

Australia sees its vast territorial and mineral resources attracting the envy of the over-crowded nations to its north. During the past few decades Australia happily dubbed itself "the lucky country" as it rode a crest of prosperity, buoyed up by the seemingly endless finds of oil, natural gas, and minerals, for the last of which there was a strong foreign market. Real prices have fallen as the market became more competitive, but the mineral resources are seen as both a guarantee for the future and a magnet for envy. In addition, at home, competition in manufactured goods imported from a rapidly developing Asia is biting hard in a country which had become complacent over relatively low productivity and a high cost structure. The economic situation is less buoyant today, and confidence in the medium term future is somewhat shaken. A vigorous nation, very well endowed with natural resources and with a well educated and self-confident people, Australia will, no doubt, rise to the present challenge and resume its prosperous march forward. But, in the meantime, it will have to tighten its collective belt. The Defence Force will not be immune. The prospect of achieving full self-sufficiency in defence is likely to recede. The value of ANZUS membership, therefore, remains high in public opinion.

#### *Australia's Identification of the Potential Threat*

Since the late 1950s Australia has been a nation looking for a potential threat against which to shape its Defence Force. For some thirty years Indonesia has provided a somewhat unconvincing point of reference but, as the years tick by with no new Soekarno on the horizon, that threat has become steadily more far-fetched except, perhaps, at a very low level of international conflict. From time to time simple Indonesian fishermen have strayed into Australian waters, sometimes coming ashore illegally on the almost uninhabited North Western coast. Infringements of that kind are irritating for any sovereign nation and raise embarrassing questions for the Australian government about the effectiveness of the provisions it has made to ensure



the security of remote parts of the nation's coast. Conversely, what is seen as the sometimes heavy-handed Australian reaction has angered the sensitive Indonesians and caused passing diplomatic coolness.

Incidents of that kind may be irritants between neighbours, but it is stretching a very long bow to suggest they have in them anything of sufficient substance to be the likely cause of war. Both countries have recognised the need to work harder to remove rather than exaggerate the potential causes of friction. Perhaps the most worrying trouble spot has been on the border between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea but there, too, both sides, recognising the danger of being drawn inadvertently into collision, have made a generally successful effort to increase co-operation and minimize the risk.

Today, Australians are more relaxed about Indonesia; they have discovered a new focus for their defence concerns. Canberra has become puzzled by and anxious about the possibilities inherent within India's impressive program of maritime force development. India's pretensions to become a major global power trouble the Australians—perhaps with good cause when one considers India's record of military intervention beyond its borders. There are even influential Indian voices advocating the production of nuclear weapons for no other purpose, they claim, than to force the world to grant them the status which they believe their position as the second most numerous nation in the world deserves.

As that concern spreads more widely throughout the ranks of Australian voters the popular regard for dependable links to a more powerful ally will stay strong regardless of what develops in Europe or how relaxed relations between the superpowers may become. Any Australian political party adopting policies, akin to New Zealand's, which jeopardised full ANZUS membership, could expect to suffer very severe public disapproval.

### *The Spread of Anti-Nuclearism*

There is little reason to doubt that, when the row within ANZUS first blew up, the Australian government's main concern was to stop the "New Zealand disease" being transmitted across the Tasman. At that time it was probably true that the

more moderate element within the ALP—who exercised control over government policy—feared a soft solution might encourage its own left wing to mount a challenge with some prospect of wide public support. That is no longer so convincing a reason for concern. Mikhail Gorbachev has seen to that. By accepting the “zero option” on intermediate-range missiles and agreeing to negotiate major cuts in strategic weapons and conventional forces he has exorcised the specter of nuclear war from the minds of all but a few millenarians. Today, the potential for an effective internal challenge to the Hawke faction’s conservative control of defence and foreign policy appears much less real than at the height of the Peace Movement’s global campaign against the deployment of American cruise and Pershing 2 missiles to counter the SS–20s. At that time, even in distant Australia, public emotion on the subject was not far beneath the surface, ready to be aroused and exploited by the more radical faction of the ALP.

With the signature of the INF Treaty and the consequent flood of agreements to pursue more substantial reductions in both conventional forces and strategic nuclear weapons, the fire has gone out of all but the most single-minded anti-nuclear crusaders. A radical faction which tried to introduce port access policies based on the New Zealand pattern would outrage the majority of Australian voters, who still see value in a strong defence alliance. Such a faction would seriously prejudice the ALP’s chances of reelection and is, therefore, unlikely to win control of the party. It is no longer convincing to argue that fear of giving encouragement to their own left wing is any longer the main reason for the Australian government’s tough requirements before New Zealand is accepted back into ANZUS as a full member.

### *Why Compromise is Opposed*

Australian officials have made it clear that they would expect their government to oppose America’s acceptance of a compromise based on something like the Danish solution. Why, under today’s circumstances, a solution acceptable within the much more demanding West European situation should not be at least equally acceptable in the South Pacific is hard to understand,

unless there are considerations other than those normal within a security alliance in play. One need not look far to find them. The present situation must suit Australia very well. The ANZUS Treaty continues as the basis of an intimate bilateral relationship with the United States which goes beyond defence issues. There is no third member to distract Washington's attention from the link with Canberra or to drag Australia down to effective equality with the smaller partner as fellow secondary allies. Australia can now expect to be seen as the most effective spokesman for the South Pacific in Europe and the United States. That improves its position throughout the South Pacific and in contiguous Southeast Asia. Australia now enjoys a position of political dominance over New Zealand beyond anything it previously experienced. The ANZAC ship decision is evidence enough of that. Australia is unlikely to give up its present comfortable position if that can be avoided.

### *THE NEW ZEALAND ATTITUDE*

#### *The Labour Party's Position*

Since the last parliamentary elections, in August 1987, there has been no sign that the New Zealand government's position on ship visits and alliance membership has softened. In August 1989, Lange, who had been seen by the Americans as both the principal player in establishing the anti-nuclear policy and the prime mover in taking New Zealand out of ANZUS, resigned, under pressure, as Prime Minister. Any thought that with his departure room might be found for accommodation between the estranged allies was soon dispelled. Geoffrey Palmer, the new Prime Minister, made an unequivocal statement that there would be no changes made in the existing anti-nuclear policies. "None is proposed. None will eventuate."<sup>8</sup>

That was hardly surprising. The Labour Party has applied anti-nuclearism as perhaps the most powerful glue holding it together against the centrifugal forces apparently inherent within

all Labour Parties. In the case of the New Zealand party those forces have been strengthened by the ideological shock administered by the unsocialistic economic policies put in place by the parliamentary section over the outraged protests of the political section of the party. Any move to reduce the cause for dispute with the nuclear armed allies could be expected to split the party even further and so, almost certainly, ensure defeat at the next elections. It would also guarantee that the newly appointed parliamentary leader was consigned to political oblivion. Many New Zealand political leaders could be said to have self-destructed but none deliberately in a form of political harikari—which is what a move to change anti-nuclear policies by a Labour Party leader would be.

While Labour stays in power it is most unlikely there will be any real change in the form or manner of implementation of its anti-nuclear policy. Now that National has embraced the same policy, there is no domestic political incentive for Labour to consider moderating its position. The absolutist form of anti-nuclearism is no longer a political issue which voters can see as separating the two parties.

### *The Yale Speech*

Predicting accurately an electorate's reaction to a proposed policy change is always difficult. It can also prove hazardous. Lange discovered the truth of that caution, to his confusion, after speaking at Yale in April 1989.<sup>9</sup> Mr Lange's political blunder at Yale may have been of critical importance in ending his days as Prime Minister. It delivered another severe dent to his already questionable public credibility.

In fact, the extent of the public outrage stirred up by a few words imbedded in an otherwise unexceptionable address was surprising. The then Prime Minister did no more than suggest, almost in passing, that his government might soon consider ending the uncomfortable stand-off by lodging notice of New Zealand's intention to withdraw from the ANZUS Council, so formalizing its de facto disconnection from the alliance. The move would have been entirely consistent with the actual policy followed since Labour came to office and, therefore, should have come as no surprise. Yet, throughout the country there was

an immediate and furious outcry. The reaction was, no doubt, the more angry and vocal because the first public report of the bombshell appeared early on the morning of "ANZAC Day" (25 April), on which New Zealanders and Australians traditionally honour those who served and fell in past wars—all fought in concert with allies in the collective defence of common principles and shared interests.

Lange could hardly have chosen a less appropriate time to suggest New Zealand should formalize its rejection of a role in collective defence. Throughout the nation, veterans and fellow citizens, at stand-to at dawn to honour past sacrifices, on hearing the news were outraged and ready to "go over the top" again in pursuit of the desecrater. On the orders of his troops, the Prime Minister hurriedly sounded the retreat, recognizing there was still probably just as much political danger in advocating making permanent the *de facto* separation from the Western community of nations as in proposing that the anti-nuclear regime should be softened.

Where Lange erred was in his assessment of the strength of popular desire to return one day to the nation's accustomed position as a reliable contributor to collective defence and a fully accepted member of the Western community. The most questionable aspect of his display was not that he raised the possibility of formal withdrawal—or even his atrocious timing—it was the facility with which he and his colleagues recanted as soon as the pressure of public anger came on. So much for previous brave claims of standing firm on issues of principle. If the thought had been introduced more sensitively it might have been received more calmly. The proposal to consider formal withdrawal was at least consistent with the actual policy adopted and could be seen as the first genuine attempt by the government to confront the real issue publicly.

### *Dissent within Alliance*

It is fundamental to a free alliance of democratic nations that every member, regardless of relative power, has the right to adopt an opposing point of view; as the Lange government did when it embraced absolutist anti-nuclearism. Of course, no member has the right to insist on having its policy accepted. It

certainly has no right to demand that its partners prejudice what they see as their vital national interests to remove a point of policy disagreement. That is more or less the impasse arrived at within ANZUS in 1985. When that point is reached in an alliance it is appropriate that the party in disagreement with the majority opinion be invited to review its position, that is, to decide whether to accept what the majority sees to be an essential common position or to withdraw from an alliance in which its presence is no longer congenial or relevant.

Lange appeared to be heading towards that conclusion in his speech at Yale. He was quite right when he suggested that, since his government had no intention of moderating its absolutist anti-nuclear policies, there was no possibility while Labour remained in office of the allies reaching a form of understanding which would again make New Zealand an accepted member of ANZUS. It was, therefore, appropriate to consider serving formal notice of intention to withdraw from the ANZUS Council; that being the only method available to record formal dissociation. The logic is flawless. Rationally, in the circumstances, the only options open are to make the changes necessary to gain reacceptance or to make the *de facto* situation formal by withdrawing. Any other action would be dishonest, flying in the face of reality and misleading the New Zealand public about the implications of present policies. Should National assume office after the 1990 elections and persevere with its newly adopted policy on allied ship visits it, too, will have to confront the logic of that argument.

On 12 October 1989, the new Prime Minister, Geoffrey Palmer, issued a statement to the effect that his government did not intend to follow Lange's suggestion. A logical approach to policy formulation had proven hazardous. Almost immediately after taking over, Palmer had also declared there would be no change in the government's anti-nuclear policies. In other words, no attempt would be made to find middle ground accommodating both majority wishes. At present, there probably remain almost as many electors who would prefer to remain linked into the Western world as there are those adamant that nuclear rejection must be absolute if it is to have any meaning at all. The National Research Bureau poll conducted for the Committee of

Enquiry on Defence in 1986 showed that over 70 percent of the population favoured each of the two propositions.<sup>10</sup> Subsequent polls have given little cause to doubt that those figures remain broadly representative of public opinion although, no doubt, the National Party's switch will have had some effect. That being so, there should be a politically acceptable place for a compromise which finds accommodation for the two majority views. If the democratic process has any validity in New Zealand a sincere attempt should be made to find one. Prime Minister Palmer's statement, together with the National Party's subsequent policy reversal, would seem to have closed off that possibility in the immediate future.

### *The National Party's Changing Position*

Prior to Baker's change of policy, the National Party had committed itself "to return New Zealand to the position of an active participant in ANZUS and to amend the present anti-nuclear legislation to the extent required to make ship visits possible." Within a week of Baker's meeting with Minister Moore a meeting of the caucus of the National Party members of Parliament discarded the previous policy and, in effect, adopted that developed by their Labour opponents.

It was open to question whether that pledge would have been to its electoral advantage in a country that has been encouraged by an almost ceaseless flow of propaganda to equate anti-nuclearism with the search for peace, and withdrawal from alliance with the assertion of national independence. It was, however, a statement of policy clearly based on principle rather than opportunistic electoral advantage, and could be expected to win respect and some support for that reason alone. Moreover, there are sufficient voters with memories of World War II and appreciation for the value of collective defence to balance those, mainly of a younger generation, who might be expected to respond badly to such a policy.

The Leader of the Opposition, Jim Bolger, now said:

The provision for [acceptance of] the NCND stance on nuclear weapons will be eliminated from our defence policy and we will give New Zealanders a clear guarantee that New Zealand will

remain nuclear free—that is, free of both nuclear weapons and nuclear-powered vessels—under defence arrangements made by the National Government.<sup>11</sup>

It has yet to be shown whether the National Party's more recent, but equally hasty and opportunistic, reversal of a long-standing policy will upset voters as much as Labour's handling of the repercussions from the Yale speech. Labour supporters and anti-alliance partisans will welcome the move. There will be few who admire it. Ironically, the only National member to have emerged with enhanced status from the policy reversal was the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Don McKinnon, who had been the most forceful advocate of the now discarded policy. He earned the respect of people of all political persuasions when he resigned as Shadow Spokesman on Defence because he could not support the security policies adopted by his colleagues.\*

There could be an electoral price to be paid. Many of those who usually support National do so because they feel strongly on the issue of collective security and New Zealand's need to bear an honourable, if small, part of the burden. With that difference between the two parties stripped away, many of them will consider there is little of substance left to separate the two contenders for office. That might be seen as a fair judgement. Since Labour came to office in July 1984, it has set out to seize the central ground. In all but its security policies Labour, under both Prime Ministers Lange and Palmer, has succeeded in taking over almost all of National's traditional positions on economic and domestic political issues. Many would argue that, in practice, Labour has moved to the right of the policies that National actually pursued when previously in power. While Geoffrey Palmer and the more conservative members retain control the parliamentary section of Labour is unlikely to veer far from that position.

The main electoral scrutiny has, therefore, become focused on the personal credibility of the opposing candidates. National's unconvincing explanation for its reversal of policy on

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\*Don McKinnon became the Minister for External Affairs and Trade in Bolger's cabinet following the October 1990 electoral victory.—Ed.



alliance issues has tended to remove even that point of difference. The results of the 1990 parliamentary elections are now going to depend almost exclusively on voters' perceptions of which party is less unacceptable. In that situation, being in office and, therefore, held responsible for the current unhappy state of the nation, Labour continues to have the cards stacked against it.

*The Practicability of National's Previous Policy*

Under its previous policies the National opposition party was committed to amend the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone Act as necessary to permit visits by allied warships and to seek a return to full participation in ANZUS. What it then proposed might fairly be compared to the Danish solution to the same dilemma. As in Denmark, it offered an answer attentive to both strands of the recorded majority preference.

Was National's commitment practicable? Plainly, there were within the party those who had their doubts. One of the reasons cited by the Leader of the Opposition, Jim Bolger, in defence of the policy reversal was that New Zealand would have faced widespread civil disorder, led by the anti-nuclear activists, if ships seen as possibly bearing nuclear weapons were allowed port access. If that was, indeed, a significant consideration in the decision, it reflects a serious lack of regard for the basic principles of democratic government. On the day a party, seeking election to govern, suggests it is ready to cede authority to mobs in the streets, the way is open for unelected demagogues to take over effective control of policy.

Bolger was right, however, if he was saying that any government trying to implement a policy that did not meet the demands of single issue fundamentalists must be prepared to stand up to large-scale and, probably, disorderly protest. An excess of zealotry has been the main obstacle to be overcome in attempts to find a balanced compromise between the two policies, each preferred by a substantial majority of New Zealand citizens. The two preferred options of rejecting nuclear weapons and remaining within the alliance have been falsely portrayed by their more ardent supporters as so incompatible as to prohibit discovery of some acceptable meeting ground where, in genuine respect for the democratic process, the wishes of the greatest

number of New Zealanders could be satisfied. That mutual intolerance of anything but the absolute observance of one or other of the two options is unworthy of a politically mature nation. It is undemocratic. It is also uncomfortably similar to the zealotry practised in totalitarian states where the demand for absolute purity is a device used to prevent the moderation of the ruling regime's more extreme strictures.

The two policies of rejecting nuclear weapons in the direct defence of New Zealand but adhering to the principles of collective defence through active alliance membership are quite capable of mutual accommodation without substantial compromise on either side. Membership of ANZUS imposes no absolute commitments; no more does it attract absolute guarantees. It recognizes the sovereign obligation of each contracting government to retain independence to decide, in the light of the circumstances at the time, what it should do to answer attack on one of its fellow members. That is healthy and as it should be. The strength of such an arrangement comes from the genuine sense of mutual regard between the signatories rather than the precise wording of the treaty.

The pro-alliance faction has been content to live with a small measure of ambiguity in the defence guarantee. No matter what its opinion may be about the merit of the policy, it must be prepared to respect the majority wish to exclude nuclear weapons. Similarly, the anti-nuclear faction should be satisfied if the policy followed makes it almost (but not absolutely) certain that nuclear weapons will be excluded from New Zealand's territory and ports. Acceptance of something less than absolute certainty in no way diminishes the effect of the declaration of policy intent which is obliged to accept the majority wish to return to alliance. The absolutists at each end of New Zealand's domestic dispute, who cannot accept that kind of outcome, deserve to be seen for what they are, zealots, without respect for the essential democratic principles of moderation and intelligent compromise.

### *The Non-Declaratory Problem*

The non-declaratory (NCND) policy rigidly observed by New Zealand's two nuclear armed allies, the United States and Great

Britain, remains at the heart of the problem. Even in the less threatening world we seem likely to face for at least as long as it takes the Soviet Union to gain some kind of economic strength and political stability (or dump Gorbachev in favour of a neo-Stalinist) neither the United States nor Britain is likely to be prepared to compromise on NCND. Who can say what the situation will be in 5-10 years? Right now, a prospective government must base its policy expectations on present knowns. The nuclear versions of the ASROC, SUBROC, and Terrier weapons systems, which posed the main difficulties in 1985, will all be gone from the US inventory by the end of 1990. They are being removed from service without replacement. Then, so far as US visitors are concerned, the only troublesome weapon on the classes of ships which have commonly visited New Zealand will be the Sea Launched Cruise Missile (SLCM) Tomahawk.

It is possible that within the next few years nuclear tipped SLCMs will be outlawed under some new agreement reached between the superpowers as the START negotiations proceed. The Soviet Union has been pressing for removal of what it sees as an unbalanced maritime-based nuclear threat against its strategic land targets. To date, the United States has not been receptive to the proposal, but there are now powerful American voices being raised in favour of greater flexibility:

The United States should consider negotiating with the Soviet Union to eliminate tactical nuclear weapons from surface warships and submarines, or to reduce its naval forces in exchange for major Soviet concessions on strategic arms disputes.<sup>12</sup>

It is ironic—and should shame the less moderate American-bashers at the time of the Buchanan dispute—that the speaker was, in 1985, the CINCPAC with whom agreement was reached on the selection of the ship to be nominated to visit. To those who know him well, it comes as no surprise that his should be the voice of intelligent moderation raised in favour of balanced nuclear arms reductions. That has long been his wish, as it has been for almost all senior military officers in the Western world.

Negotiations, however, even if shaped by such views, are

likely to take some years to reach a final agreement. That being said, a New Zealand government wishing to return to alliance, would have to face up to respecting the NCND policy at a time when the enigmatic Tomahawk will be on some of the classes of warships which might be nominated for visits. The nuclear and conventional versions of the weapon defy discrimination by simple external inspection, despite their quite different ranges and homing systems. The conventional version, which makes up the great majority of those produced, is really a long-range and more heavily armed anti-ship weapon of the Harpoon type, equipped to seek out and home on a ship at sea with a background uncluttered by other returns likely to confuse its homing sensors. It could be seen to have application in any naval warfare, including in the South Pacific. The nuclear version is designed for attacks on strategically important land targets and has much the same performance, guidance, and homing systems as the GLCMs withdrawn from Europe under the INF agreement. It relies on terrain matching radar to update its guidance system. That will not work over the open sea. The nuclear version has no conceivable application in the South Pacific. The probability of the nuclear version being carried on a voyage to New Zealand is, therefore, especially low.

### *The Need to Stand Firm*

Implementation of National's now discarded policy would have required readiness to stand firm against the rowdy opposition to visits that would certainly have been mounted, not because there would have been any real likelihood of the ships carrying nuclear weapons but because the more extreme activists would have conjured up inflated fears of that possibility to prevent a return to alliance. There were those who advocated doing nothing—like Micawber, “waiting for something to turn up”—in the hope the problem would go away as superpower negotiations on tactical nuclear weapons progress. That was unwise counsel. Its acceptance could be expected to prejudice any possibility of an eventual return to alliance and so place New Zealand at a long-term disadvantage in its international relations. That would, of course, please those determined to take New Zealand permanently out of alliance with the United States and so out of the

central core of the Western community.

The probability that a visiting warship would be carrying a nuclear weapon has been low since 1984, when the present government first spelled out its policy. With the departure of the nuclear versions of ASROC, SUBROC, and Terrier from US naval arsenals it is even more unlikely. There will still remain, however, a small element of uncertainty in respect to Tomahawk-equipped ships. To acknowledge and accept the faint possibility that—unknown to its hosts—a visiting warship might carry a nuclear weapon, would be to bear a very small part of the common burden of collective security.

### *The Outlook*

On the face of it, since both main political parties now have the same anti-nuclear policy, the prospects for return to alliance will be unaffected by the outcome of New Zealand's parliamentary elections in 1990. But should it transpire that the US attitude towards New Zealand has not changed substantially, the scope of high level contacts with the US Administration will remain little more than it has been for the past three or more years. The National Party's incontinent abandonment of its earlier ship visit policy could then be seen as a serious mistake.

As that realisation sinks in, perhaps time will be found to conduct a more careful and comprehensive examination of the actual probability of nuclear weapons being on board the classes of ships which might be expected to seek authority to visit. Similarly, the real safety considerations involved in hosting visits, under controlled circumstances, by nuclear-powered vessels of the US and British navies might be subjected to objective scientific examination. If that were to occur, it would be reasonable to expect a responsible government to recognise that the balance of the facts and the national interest required return to something like the moderate and balanced policy advocated by the National Party before it sacrificed principle to electoral caution.

In the meantime, having adopted the same policy towards the United States as the Labour government, National should not expect to receive any different treatment in return. Since, in its statement of revised policy, National explicitly rejected the non-declaratory policy (something Labour avoided in word if not in

deed) it might expect to incur even greater American and British displeasure. Should National come to office at the next elections and not be prepared to endure the same international disregard as its predecessor, it will have to reconsider its recent and very public change of direction. In that case it should expect little sympathy. The speed with which it reversed its previous policy at the first sign it might be running into electoral difficulties in pursuing its current path, was hardly calculated to encourage respect or trust in the dependability of any new direction it might take. Neither Washington nor London is likely to prove as accommodating as it would have been if National had demonstrated rather more constancy in the pursuit of a principled solution.

### *A CONSTANTLY EVOLVING RELATIONSHIP*

The problem in United States-New Zealand relations, which developed in 1985, is not a dead issue. It has not been settled by Secretary Baker's meeting with Minister Moore, at which a restricted range of topics was discussed. Nor should National's decision to back away from any attempt to recover the status of an ally be seen as the final word on New Zealand's alliance membership. In effect, the relationship between any two nations, no matter how different they may be in size and power, is a constantly evolving condition which must be managed continuously if it is to remain healthy and both parties are to get the best from it. No one is entitled to be satisfied with the constrained connection that now exists between Washington and Wellington.

From the beginning, the nuclear issue has been at the heart of the unhappy dispute. That remains so. If a mutually more productive association is to be reestablished, some movement will be required on both sides to find an acceptable settlement of the stand-off over the entry of US naval vessels into New Zealand ports. Simply walking away from alliance is an inadequate response from either party. It is not as if the world has suddenly

become so secure that collective defence is no longer necessary. The immediate threat of war between the superpowers has receded, but that does not mean the world has become safe. The probability of regional war is worse than ever. Moreover, the spread of ballistic missile technology, chemical weapons, and fuel/air warheads—not to mention the prospect of further nuclear proliferation—is placing enormous destructive capabilities in the hands of many national leaders who have shown little moderation in the past.

The forthcoming period of more diffuse threat is, in many respects, more frightening than was the bipolar, superpower-centred confrontation from which we are now escaping. It is likely to prove less predictable or controllable. The value of close consultation and collective action to nip trouble in the bud could be even greater than when ANZUS was at its most cohesive. The forthcoming era seems likely to be marked by great and unpredictable changes in the world's political, economic, and military affairs. It is no time to sink back into complacent solitude. On the contrary, it is a time to reach out for a firm grip on the hands most capable of giving effective support in an uncertain era. It is a time to take fresh stock of the international situation and to weigh once more the value of a close relationship with the United States.

For the foreseeable future the United States will be the greatest single economic unit in the world. Even a restructured Europe would need to tread warily in its dealings. Despite the current administration's improvident determination to take in less than it spends and the eager competition between Congressmen to see who can hack the biggest lump of pork from the Defence Budget, America should remain, for at least the next few decades, a sufficiently powerful economic and military unit to give pause to any other nation or group of nations which might develop. Only the United States has the full range of economic, political, and military power to play the constructive role of bridge and moderator between Japan, the other Pacific rim nations and Europe. If it accepts that role, America is likely to prove the best available guarantor of Australian and New Zealand economic security: as it was their best defence guarantor in the past era of international risk.

In New Zealand the search for national identity continues. Where does it belong? That is a question underlying much of the recent domestic debate about the external relationships New Zealand should form. The increasingly common proposition that New Zealand is a South Pacific nation is claimed by some to be the end of the matter. It is not. The statement is worth making; but only so long as it is not taken too seriously. Its value lies in making New Zealanders sit up and reconsider where and who they are. But it is not, in itself, an adequate answer to the riddle; nor is it a sound basis for policy decisions.

Since the first systematic European settlement, beginning in the 1840s, New Zealand has been a nation with more in common with Europe (or, more particularly, with Britain) than with the indigenous cultures and institutions of the South Pacific. There is nothing shameful in that. On the contrary, it is the source of New Zealand's greatest strengths as a society. It is a quality which deserves to be celebrated—not to be walked away from.

From the time of the first European settlement, New Zealanders of all races have proved adaptable, ready to adjust to the changed environment, and to assimilate new cultural values. It may be true that the British institutional concepts have dominated but that is because they were more highly developed, coherent, and proven in the governance of national, as opposed to tribal, societies. That is not to deny that there has been a significant transfer of cultural and communal values from the Maori. The amalgam produced is different from either of the original bases from which it was formed. It is, today, in many respects unique—and its evolution is not complete.

It is not to be denied that New Zealand is fundamentally different from the island states of the South Pacific. The aim should be to form a harmonious and mutually respectful relationship rather than commonality. For New Zealanders to accept the latter would be to accept the regression into smallness and isolation towards which recent foreign policy shifts point. Geographically, it is true, New Zealand's destiny is bound up in the South Pacific. Economically, intellectually, and in its societal institutions its future fulfilment will lie predominantly in the full development of its European origins and its global connections.



Similarly, New Zealand (as is Australia) is destined to be drawn into the affairs and be affected by the fortunes of Asia. But neither nation is nor can become part of Asia. Geographically, historically, culturally, and institutionally we are different. We will certainly be influenced profoundly by the relationships that develop, in the next few decades, with a number of Asian nations. There will be more Asian migration to the South. The peoples of the two regions will get to understand one another better. They will become more interdependent. But, at the end of the day, the basic differences will have been moderated rather than removed. Australia and New Zealand will continue to have more in common with Britain, Canada, the United States, and one another than with their Asian or South Pacific neighbours.

It is folly for New Zealand to weaken the ties of mutual interest and regard which have bound it into a collective of like-minded nations with shared economic, political, and security interests. The world has been dangerous for New Zealand in the past. Most often that danger has been indirect, but it was no less real for that. It arose from attack upon the great powers upon whom New Zealand's security (in the full sense of its political, economic, and defence integrity) has depended. New Zealand's contribution to collective action to ward off those threats was not the result of mindless subordination or bellicosity. It arose from a clear-eyed recognition of shared interests and common destiny as fellow democratic nations. There is no guarantee that similar dangers will not arise in the future. The security policies now adopted by both major political parties fly in the face of that logic. They hazard New Zealand's future as a secure, prosperous, and progressive nation.

It would be easy to wash one's hands of the whole unhappy mess and leave tomorrow to look after itself. But it was through inattention to the complexities of distant but all-pervasive strategic issues that New Zealand was lured into the dead-end that now confronts it. In any case, there is no excuse for terminal despair as we contemplate the present unhappy prospect. The disadvantages of reduced acceptance in the centres of greatest influence—that is, the capitals of our traditional allies—must, inevitably, become apparent. As that realisation sinks in, there will arise a popular demand for change. No matter what may be

their pretensions, few politicians are leaders in policy trends: most find it safer to be followers. The politicians, now intent on leading New Zealand into South Pacific isolation, will be quick enough to change direction as soon as they see support departing—as it will when the penalties of trying to go it alone are recognised.

In the meantime, it is important that New Zealanders lift their eyes above regional horizons and focus more clearly on the global trends—advantageous and threatening—that will shape tomorrow's international affairs. Then, the value of the mutually respectful and trusting association, which can be found fully only in alliance, will become obvious to enough people to bring change.

If New Zealand is to avoid being left standing unheeded outside the council rooms while within its friends shape the future world, it must first recover the best possible relationship with the United States and, in consequence, with the economically powerful West European nations and Japan. To that end, Wellington needs to regain the status of ally. It is not enough to be just a friend. The difference is not a matter of semantics. The less influential position of a non-ally has been demonstrated very clearly by the changes that have occurred since 1985 in New Zealand's relationship with its traditional partners. It might be responsible to accept the penalties of a more distant relationship if there were substantial benefits on the other side. There are not. For a small nation to consider itself so morally upright that it must reject contamination by withdrawing into sanctimonious reclusion is pretentious and silly. There is no such thing as a truly independent nation anymore. The financial and trade elements of economic existence are so intertwined that no nation, no matter how large it may be, can afford to cut itself off and expect to keep up with others as they grow together. Small nations certainly cannot. Intellectual advancement also demands close involvement with the great centres of innovation in science, technology, industry, economic theory, and philosophy. That connection does not imply the need to copy others mindlessly. It means knowing them well in a close and open relationship; learning from their errors as well as their successes. That is not so easy from the distance imposed by mutual disrespect.

The American Secretary of State's decision to meet with the New Zealand Minister of External Affairs and Trade and National's consequent about-turn might be seen to have ended any prospect there may have been of return to alliance. There might seem to be little difference between the access opened up by that meeting and that to be expected as an ally. But that is untrue. Mr Moore's comment that "New Zealand and the United States had now effectively normalised relations"<sup>13</sup> is much too sanguine. In response to the sharp reactions the meeting drew from Tokyo, Canberra, and within Washington, it is likely that future political access will remain strictly limited in frequency and coverage. Contrary to New Zealand's exaggerated expectations, springing from the constrained meeting on 1 March, that its senior political representatives had been called in from the cold, contacts at a high level with those mapping out the direction of Western policy seem likely to remain restricted. Nothing much will have changed in practice. And it won't while New Zealand continues to pursue policies which the most influential of its political and economic partners see as harmful to their enduring security interests.

Only as an ally can New Zealand expect, once more, to enjoy the best possible political access where it matters most. If more complete reacceptance in Washington, Tokyo, London, and the capitals of Western Europe were to do no more than bring New Zealand back to near equality with Australia in dealing with the world's movers and shakers that would be justification enough for a determined effort to find reconciliation. Wellington should not expect Canberra to treat New Zealand on equal terms if no other nation accepts the two on that basis. But that is not all there is to be gained. New Zealand's growing international irrelevance is weakening its old friends' regard for its interests. Recovery of ally status would help refocus their eyes.

In any case, euphoric as so many feel about the prospects for universal and enduring peace, there is a long way to go before that vision is more than a rosy dream. Although his comment stirred up a minor storm, Deputy Secretary of State Eagleburger was right when he said that the period of the Cold War had been marked by remarkable strategic stability and certainty

in political alignments but that the future might be more complex and demanding. He went on to say:

[T]he positive and indeed revolutionary changes which are sweeping the world today are reversible. They cannot be sustained by the United States alone. They can, however, be sustained, and the dangers which exist turned into opportunities, if the Western democracies renew their commitment to a collective and cooperative approach to the major issues which confront them.<sup>14</sup>

That was not nostalgia for the simpler issues of the confrontational past, as so many commentators were too quick to charge: it was no more than recognition of an important reality. It is a reality which New Zealanders no less than Americans must take into account when setting a course for the next era of world history. This is no time for New Zealand to accept isolationism for itself or, by its policies, to encourage it in the United States.

No one can foresee how long the uncertain transition will last. Everyone should be able to see that, until a new equilibrium is found, the possibility of international conflict will remain; albeit, at a lower level than the global cataclysm which for so long preoccupied so many anxious minds. The disturbance of the global balance of power will lead to an unstable period in international affairs as nations fumble about with new relationships designed to best serve their individual interests. At the same time, the heavily armed nations of the Third World may be emboldened by the relative weakness of a too rapidly disarming Western Alliance to take up arms to further their ambitions. That's what North Korea did 40 years ago when faced with a similar temptation. The report that bellicose Iraq, with its demonstrated contempt for the conventions on chemical weapons, has launched its own long-range missile, capable of carrying chemical or fuel/air warheads, serves warning of the dangers which might be in store. Forecasts of a kinder and gentler international community are not yet convincing.

Closer to home the prospect is no more reassuring for New Zealand. The potential for more trouble in the process of real decolonisation of the French possessions in the Pacific, the

smouldering aftermath of the Fijian coups, the growing power of India and its demonstrated readiness to intervene to settle local disputes to its liking, the political instability in Papua New Guinea, troubles along its border with Indonesia, Libyan meddling both in New Caledonia and in neighbouring Vanuatu's tribal political squabbles, and the possibility of internal strife in Tonga at the time of the next change of monarch, all point to possible conflict in the once tranquil South Pacific. Even "Little New Zealanders," who think New Zealand's security interests end at some magical fence constructed by pious proclamation about the South Pacific, could have good cause in the next few decades to value the presence of a powerful ally looking over their shoulders as they scan the white caps forming on their own once placid horizon.

Now that the initial excitement of taking a novel direction has subsided it is time for New Zealanders to take thoughtful stock of their nation's present situation and consider what the future might hold. In a world knocked off balance by the collapse of the Soviet empire the possibilities for political, economic, and even military disputation have not disappeared. They have multiplied. New Zealand's security will be affected. It should not expect to be able to stand aloof untouched by what develops. New Zealanders need to decide whether they are content to accept their nation's present status of distant and increasingly irrelevant friend. Or would they prefer to return to the old, more fully engaged, relationship of ally and so have more say in shaping the future? The choice is theirs to make.

# NOTES

## Chapter I. THE PARTING

1. "Pom" is a mildly disparaging term commonly used by Australians and New Zealanders to describe people of British citizenship. It is a term now used most frequently in friendly banter. Its derivation is obscure. One common explanation, often accepted for lack of any better, is that it derived from the initial letters of "Prisoner of (His) Majesty" in honour of many of Australia's first British settlers.

2. Rudyard Kipling, "Song o' the Dead."

3. This paragraph reflects the thoughts of former Secretary of State, George Shultz, speaking on TV, Washington, 8 January 1990.

4. Richard Tanter, "Pre-conditions for De-linking Australia from the Nuclear System" in *The Pacific: Peace, Security and the Nuclear Issue*, R. Walker and W. Sutherland, eds., Zed Books Ltd. 1988.

5. A term coined in 1986 by Helen Clark MP (later Deputy Prime Minister) to define the status which she suggested New Zealand should adopt in shaping its future foreign relations.

6. Air New Zealand Almanac, 1989.

7. Rt. Hon. David Lange, "New Zealand Foreign Policy: The Nuclear Issue and Great Power-Small State Relations." The George Herbert Walker Jr. Lecture, Yale University, 24 April 1989.

8. National Research Bureau poll completed 19 May 1986, *Report of the Defence Committee of Enquiry*, Wellington, July 1986. p. 40.

9. Joseph A. Camilleri, *Australian-American Relations: the Web of Dependence*, Macmillan, 1980.

10. Sir Bob Jones, "When Truth Embarrasses," *Evening Post*, Wellington, 8 January 1990.

11. Rt. Hon. David Lange, Labour Party Conference, Te Atatu, 9 May 1986.

12. Rt. Hon. David Lange, Oxford Union Debate, Oxford University, 1 March 1985.

13. Hon. Russell Marshall, Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, March 1988.

14. Ibid.

15. Report of The New Zealand Labour Party Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security, Wellington, September 1989.

16. John Toland, *Infamy—Pearl Harbor and its Aftermath*, New York: Doubleday and Co, Inc., New York, 1982.

17. *New Zealand Foreign Affairs Review*, no. 35, Summer 1985.

18. Rt. Hon. David Lange, "The George Herbert Walker Jr. Lecture," Yale University, 24 April 1989.

19. Extracts drawn from Dora Alves, *Anti-nuclear Attitudes in New Zealand and Australia*, Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1985.

20. *The New Zealand Herald*, 8 March 1985.

21. *The New Zealand Herald*, 5 March 1985.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*

## Chapter II. PROSPECTS FOR RECONCILIATION

1. *Evening Post*, 10 August 1989.

2. *The Christian Science Monitor*, 8 February 1990.

3. Reply given to a journalist, Connic Lawn, at a State Department press conference, 8 March 1990.

4. *Australian Foreign Affairs Review*, 56, 5.

5. *Evening Post*, Wellington, 4 November 1989.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 November 1989, p. 1.

8. *Evening Post*, Wellington, 8 August 1989.

9. Lange, "The George Herbert Walker Jr. Lecture, Yale University, 24 April 1989.

10. *Report of the Defence Committee of Enquiry*, Wellington, July 1986, p. 43.

11. *The Dominion*, Wellington, 9 March 1990.

12. Admiral William J. Crowe Jr., retired Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (1985-89), *The Washington Post*, 8 January 1990.

13. *The Evening Post*, Wellington, 1 March 1990.

14. Deputy Secretary of State, Lawrence S. Eagleburger, "Uncharted Waters: US Foreign Policy in a Time of Transition," Georgetown University, 13 September 1989.

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